

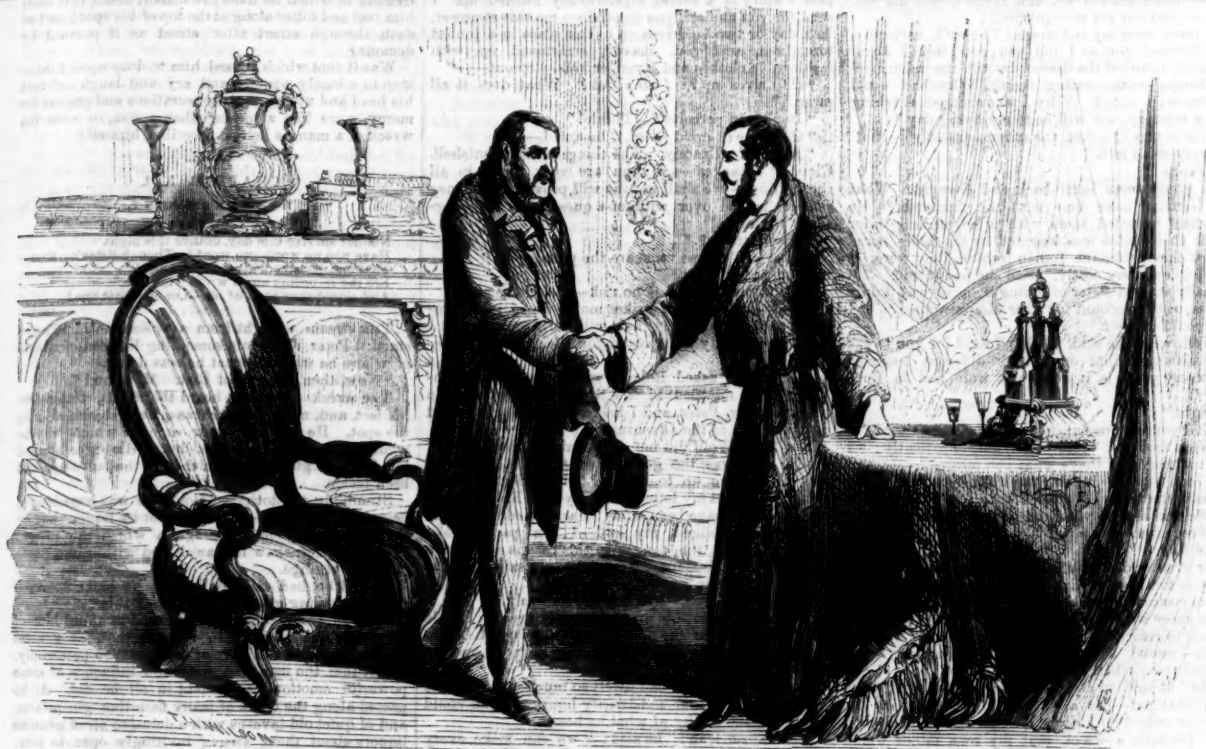
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[THE COMPACT.]

MRS. LARKALL'S BOARDING SCHOOL.

By the Author of "Man and His Idol."

CHAPTER XI.

THE WRECK OF A MAN.

Have you done?
I take the jest at last. Should I speak now?

Browning.

The affairs of Roland Hernshaw did not admit of any delay in carrying into execution the idea which he regarded as a sort of inspiration.

So the very next night, Peter Wolff came to his house by appointment, having found a note from Roland in the glass over the mantle-piece in the bar of the low sporting house in which he lived.

It was safer to bring Wolff to his own house than to meet him elsewhere, yet he was so shabby and unresentable, that it was necessary for Roland to invent excuses even to his own servants, to account for the hours they spent together.

"This fellow is a miner. I am connected with mining operations, and I get a great deal of practical information from him."

This was his apology, his excuse to his own domestics.

It may seem strange that a man of wealth and position should trouble himself to offer any such excuse. But no man is quite free or independent even in that boasted castle, his own house. There is a committee of inquiry, a sort of domestic inquisition, continually sitting upon the most independent of us. And few indeed are the cases in which the drawing-room can afford to be indifferent to the verdict of the kitchen.

Peter Wolff had not dared to neglect Hernshaw's invitation; but he did not like the idea of losing Sir Sydney Robert's five thousand pounds, and he came unusually sullen and morose.

The kitchen declared that "the miner fellow" was a disgrace to the house.

So he was in appearance, if not in manners and money.

Picture to yourself a tall, wiry fellow, with a stoop in his shoulders and a lounging, awkward gait. His face, naturally sallow, was bronzed by exposure to all the climates of Europe. It was a long, thin face, in which you could see the muscles working; the prevailing expressions were those of sharpness and low cunning, the one indicated by a pair of restless black eyes, the other by the thin lips, the corners of which curled upwards as the fellow grinned, revealing teeth, large, irregular, and green from neglect. About this face hung long, straggling hair, black but seamed with saffron rather than grey. His thin whiskers and moustache were of the like description.

In attire, Peter Wolff was the ideal of shabbiness and neglect. His tall hat was mangy, greasy, and limp in its broad rim. The coat he wore had been made for a stouter man, evidently some years ago, and was held together by buttons of different patterns. A rusty-black handkerchief loosely encircled the man's brown throat, the ends flying back in the wind. Shirt there was none to be seen; gloves also were absent, and the place of boots was but imperfectly supplied by a pair which, in dry weather, enabled him to steal up to you with a noiseless tread, while on wet days the soles made a noise on the pavement like that of "suckers" unskillfully used.

Such was the man who entered Roland Hernshaw's drawing-room, just as the lamps were lighted, holding his limp hat in one hand and a blue-and-spot cotton handkerchief in the other.

The contrast the "miner" presented to the man he visited and to the place into which he had been ushered was singularly striking.

Its drawing-room was the gem of the house in South Audley Street. It was lofty and extensive. The walls were papered in imitation of watered silk, and the cornice of white and gold was at least two feet in depth. The window-drapes were of white and amber, and the lounges and chairs of the room accorded with them in material, the richest tabaret in pattern. The tables and buffets were from Dresden, and were formed chiefly of white and gold porcelain. The carpet was white in its ground, but relieved with

a gorgeous pattern of rhododendrons, the mauve tint of which was the only colour about the room.

Roland Hernshaw himself appeared in keeping with the apartment.

He lay at full length on a sofa, soft and yielding as a bed, a brocade dressing-gown wrapped loosely about him, and fastened with a silken cord and tassels. A smoking-cap was set jauntily on one side his curling hair, and he was engaged in cutting a new novel with a gold-enamelled paper-knife.

"Ah, Wolff!" he cried, looking up languidly, as if he had not been fully prepared for the other's entrance by Edouard, his valet, "you got my note?"

"Yes," was the curt answer.

"That's right, then. Draw up that lounging-chair—unless you prefer a sofa? By the way, you may be thirsty—you'll find everything in that buffet yonder. The brandy I can recommend, real cognac—shall I ring for glasses?"

"Don't trouble yourself," growled Peter, dropping into the nearest chair and crossing his legs.

Roland Hernshaw did not like the symptom. Peter drunk was easy to manage; Peter sober was obstinate and mulish. Besides, why should he be sober at that time of day—six o'clock in the evening? And what should make him doggedly refuse the chance of being otherwise?

These questions passed rapidly through the young man's brain, as he cast about for some form in which to begin the conversation.

Peter Wolff saved him the trouble.

"What's up?" he asked, bluntly.

"Oh, nothing particular has happened, but I've an idea—and I think it's very much in your line. You're fond of money, I know; though you don't look like a man who lays out much on his personal comforts."

"If you mean that I don't fool it away like some people!" returned Peter, with a sneer, as he glanced at the handsome figure before him, and then allowed his eyes to wander round the luxurious apartment: "If that's what you mean, you're about right. I don't enjoy my money, what little I get, and isn't too much, that you take good care of."

"Now, Peter, I'm not illiberal!" urged the other in his softest and most musical tones; "What you've done I've paid for, and paid well. That business of carrying off the baronet's daughter was cleverly managed, and I was not ungrateful. Besides, you had the diamonds."

"Diamonds!" Peter burst out; "what diamonds did I ever have?"

"Gertrude Norman's. You know that well enough!"

Peter Wolff started up, and threw down his hat, which he had not yet relinquished.

"If these were my last words!" he said, earnestly, "I should tell you as I tell you now, that I never saw, never heard of the diamonds, till the moment I was charged with stealing them. Who had 'em I don't know; I didn't. Why I was accused of taking 'em is a mystery, and will be to my dying day."

"This is true?" asked the other, earnestly.

"Every word of it."

"Strange!"

The young man leant back and thought. What could Gertrude have done with the diamonds? He had often regarded them with a covetous eye, for though their value was lessened by the heels bored through them, after the Indian fashion, they were, as he well knew, very costly. Had she lost them? Did she really suspect Peter of taking them, or was it only a subterfuge to account for their disappearance?

He could not tell.

"Well, well," he said, "I didn't send for you to ask about diamonds, but on a very different business. How many years is it since you were last in England?"

"Eight."

"And your circumstances then, what were they?"

"What matters?" returned Wolff, impatiently; "I wasn't worse off, if that's what you mean."

"I don't care whether you were better or worse off," said the other; "what I care for is this—is it possible that any of your old associates of that time would recognize you now?"

"As I am?"

"Or even as you may become—if anything can induce you to abandon that very easy and unpretending style of costume?" sneered Hershaw.

The sneer was not lost on Peter Wolff, but he did not care to retort. He was a man who saved up small insults—stored them away in his memory—and avenged them when a fitting time came.

"No," he said, in answer to the question; "I'm too much changed—I'm a wreck. I foundered on the rock that settled me long before you and I and Joanne met. I'm such a wreck that my own father would speak to me as a stranger, and my mother, if she was alive, would deny that she'd ever nursed me in her arms."

Hershaw heard these mournful words with the liveliest satisfaction.

"Capital!" he cried, rubbing his hands.

"Is it? Thank you!" returned his companion. "May you never strike and founder and go to pieces as I've done—that's all the harm I wish you."

"You mistake," said Roland, "I only meant that the fact of your not being easily recognized here in England is fortunate. I'm ready to put a good thing in your way. I sent for you on purpose, but I couldn't do it if you were well known—at least, if you were known as anything other than Peter Wolff."

"Make yourself easy on that score," answered the other; "respectability and I parted company long ago. What I was, what I was called, the wrong I suffered, and the sin I committed, are things of the past. You'd say that I lied if I told you that I was once as handsome and as rich as you are, wore as fine clothes, and had as smart a place to live in—you wouldn't believe it, and I don't blame you. I can hardly believe it myself sometimes. But it's true for all that. I was a gentleman, and one crime ruined me. You were—Heaven knows what you were—and one crime was the making of you. But come, to business. What devil's work have you in hand now?"

"My dear Peter," said Roland, not quite at his ease; "you'd better take a dram—ever such a taste. No? Well then, attend. It sometimes happens, as you're aware, that a wealthy man leaves his money imprudently. Sometimes he makes a will that nobody can understand: sometimes one that no one can carry into effect."

Peter fixed his keen eyes on the speaker, but did not interrupt him.

"There have been cases in which very large sums have been left to persons long since dead, and who have no heirs. In other cases the persons may or may not be living, but cannot be found. Do you know what happens in either of these cases?"

"No. What?"

"Why, the money goes to the Crown. An absurdity, you know."

"Rather. But get along."

"I have 'got along,' my dear fellow. I've already

stated half my case. A man of property has died: he has left his money to a fellow who is not forthcoming—and the money must go to the Crown."

"Unless the man can be found?"

"Not to be found! He must be found, Peter."

"That's very easily said," was the answer.

"But more easily done," said Roland. "The process is very simple. You are a young man, about the age that the missing man would be. You are unknown in England, except as a man under a cloud, whose past history is a secret, mysteriously hushed up. I send for you and ask you to produce me this stranger. In a day or two he drives up to this place in a jobbed brougham, and you, shaved, smartened up, with fashionable clothes and lavender kids, step out—"

"He drives up? I step out? What does it all mean?"

"Don't you perceive? Think!"

"Oh, I see!" cried Peter, "he and I—"

"Are one. Exactly. The thing lies in a nutshell. Cleverly managed—and you are very clever in all these things—we shall get the will proved, the money will be handed over without a question, and our fortunes are made."

"Our fortunes?"

"Yes. Of course we share the plunder."

"But not the risk?"

"Nonsense. There is no risk—absolutely none."

"Not to you; but it strikes me as exceedingly probable that the missing heir will turn up, and that I shall get quietly transported for life. That I call—risk."

"Do you?" asked Roland, with surprise and contempt both mingled in his tone, "I thought you a plucky fellow, Peter, and I believed the danger would only add zest to the adventure."

But Peter Wolff did not see it quite in that light.

"So this was the good thing that Dr. Amphlett was to put me up to, was it?" he reflected. "I'd better have sent my letter to Sir Sydney Robert. His money would have been safe." Then he added aloud: "I'm much obliged, my lord—I beg pardon, Mr. Hershaw; but the danger in this case is a *ride* too strong to be pleasant. You have not said what the fortune is to be in amount—"

"It is very large," said Roland, seriously.

"Ah, and the risk is proportionately great. People don't bag fortunes like pheasants—on the quiet. There are always prying eyes and sticking fingers; and, in short, I decline."

Roland Hershaw had dwelt so much on the idea during the past four-and-twenty hours, that he could not credit the reality of what he heard.

"Nonsense man!" he said; "we can make every arrangement—take every precaution. I've worked the whole thing out in my own mind. First, we will give the missing man a chance—we will advertise for him."

"Well?"

"We will wait a reasonable time."

"And then?"

"Why, what on earth is to prevent your proving the will, and inheriting the property of the wild, erratic scapegrace—for such I know him to have been—the man who, ten to one, has died like a dog in some roadside ditch—and proclaiming yourself to the world as *Peter Boyden Palmer*?"

At those words, Wolff sprang from his seat like a man who had been galvanised.

His eyes glared, his jaw dropped; the hair seemed lifted from his brow.

Roland Hershaw stood up in alarm. He was not frightened, but startled at the sudden emotion which the man displayed.

"Are you mad?" he cried.

Wolff gasped for words; then replied in some incoherent sentence.

"The name strikes you? You have heard it before?" urged the young man.

"Never!" gasped Wolff, as he dropped back into his seat.

For some moments he buried his face in his hands, evidently to conceal some intense emotion which racked his entire frame. Hershaw stood and watched him in utter amazement.

Presently the outcast looked up.

"You talked of brandy," he faltered; "I'll take a drop, if it's near. I don't know what the deuce has come to me."

The other hastened to produce the silver spirit-stand, and to pour out a glass of cognac. Peter Wolff swallowed it at a gulp.

"Better now?" Roland asked.

"Much. It's nothing. Don't mind me. Fact is, Hershaw, I believe my life's killing me. I must cut it."

"Well," replied the other with a smile, "I offer you the means; think it over."

"I will, great gain means great risk, doesn't it?"

"Sometimes. Not always. Not in this case. Let me see you to-morrow, at Brighton. You know where. In the meantime—a secret's a secret."

"All right! I swear to you to be as silent as the grave."

Roland held out his hand, which the other grasped, with nervous, twitching, trembling fingers, then, stumbling and blundering like a drunken man, he made his way out of the house.

"The miner's took a drop too much," was the verdict of the servant who let him out.

Had he?

Was it the effect of liquor, of that terrible delirium tremens, of which he lived in constant dread, that made him reel and totter along at the top of his speed, and so dash through street after street as if pursued by demons?

Was it that which caused him to drop upon a doorstep in a lonely square, and cry and laugh and beat his head and utter mingled execrations and prayers for mercy, more like a maniac than a man, or even the wreck of a man, as he had described himself?

CHAPTER XII.

DEFOUNCEMENT.

Think—no night

Neither survive this day, outlive this night.
Have you no word—no word? Though listening Fate
That one decisive whisper might await
Ere the recording angel wrote "too late,"
And closed your book of sin—not one—not one?

Anon.

THE stream of light from a policeman's bull's-eye startled Peter Wolff into something like consciousness of where he was and what he was doing.

"Now, then, enough of that. Move on!"

The wreck of a man heard the words, tottered to his feet, and, mumbling a curse or two, shambled from the spot. He did not know or care which way he went. His brain was on fire. His eyes seemed blinded by a glare to which that of the bull's-eye had been feeble.

Stumbling and tottering along, he was conscious of being brain-drunk—overcome, not by liquor, but by the intoxicating phantasmagoria which the project of Roland Hershaw had awakened within him.

It was strange.

For all he had said to Roland, he had committed crimes outlasting greater danger than this.

And as to the chance it seemed to afford him of regaining his position in society, that, as a mere chance, ought not to have affected him so powerfully.

But that the man was under the influence of some powerful emotion was evident in all he did. As he passed along the doors of many haunting gin-palaces, and of quiet old taverns with a delusive air of genuine liquors about them, swung invitingly open to him; but he did not enter one of them. Another time and he would have found it a trial beyond his strength to have passed them by; but to-night they had lost their temptation, or some stronger power enabled him to resist it.

"Not to-night, not to-night!" he muttered to himself as he passed door after door, quivering from head to foot as he did so.

At first it had seemed as if Peter Wolff had been borne along by the current of his own excited feelings, without any set purpose or intention. In time, however, he recovered sufficient command over himself to shape out a definite course and to pursue it.

"Infamous coward!" he muttered to himself, "how little did he think into what a trap he was falling! In those few words he has revealed everything to me—his hideous crime, the wrong for which I owe him a life's hatred, the vengeance from which no mortal agency can save him."

While indulging in these strange and bitter sentiments, he had reached the neighbourhood of Bedford Square. Then he looked about him, as if doubtful of his way. Walked slowly along each side of the square, examining each house, as he went, and occasionally stopping and scrutinizing the appearance of some one or other of those he looked at.

In due time he came to the house of which he was in search.

"This is it?" he said "there can be no mistake. And I? Do I make none in coming here? Surely, no. It is my only means of checkmating Roland Hershaw, as he calls himself. It is a clever game that he means to play; but it is I who must bag the stakes."

He ascended the steps of the house, which had a quiet, respectable aspect, and rapped at the door, in a bold and singular manner. It would have struck any one as an odd rap, especially for such a forlorn individual to give—to one whose ears it was destined to reach it was more than odd—it was significant.

In the drawing-room of that house a father and his daughter, sat on either side of the fire-place, the father lying back in his chair, with his hands crossed, listening: the daughter, seated on a low stool, round which her skirts floated in rustling waves of silk, reading from a heavy volume, which rested on her knees.

The moderator lamp, its opal globe shaded by a diaphanous square of lace, faintly illuminated the elegant apartment, and lit up the face of the man who listened, while it threw into shade that of the reader.

The face revealed was that of a man of sixty, handsome, calm, and benevolent. White locks, thrust back behind the ears, and clustering in the neck gave the man a venerable, at the same time a peculiar appearance. In gazing upon that head, so peacefully thrown back, one was irresistibly struck by the contrast between what the man was and what he must have been. It was like looking at the ashes of an extinct volcano. Once, one could tell, the fires of a strong, passionate, nature had raged there: now the snows of age had descended, and a yearning for peace and rest had subdued all fiercer instincts.

But were the fires extinct?

It was hard to tell.

Certainly, the soft blue eyes, the placid features, the venerable looks, indicated nothing but the quiescence which in the fiercest of us often precedes the long slumber of the grave.

The girl who sat at the man's feet bore a striking resemblance to him; but all the features which went to make up strength of character in the man were softened with beauty in his companion. Only in her eyes, the colour of the violet or the pansy, did she give any indication of strength of character: for the rest, she impressed one as a gentle, yielding, delicate girl, abounding in all the gentler instincts and sympathies of womanhood.

The story which the girl read, in an exquisitely soft and musical voice, was descriptive of one of the many attempts at revolutionary risings in Italy, of which history is full.

"The conspirators assembled on a beautiful night at a villa on the sea-shore, some leagues from Genoa," she read, "they were about two thousand in number. All the alleys of the immense garden were filled with them. There was darkness, there was silence. They moved down towards the beach shouldering their muskets. It was by a secret path they went —"

"It was, Carla," interrupted the listener, his eye lighting as he spoke, "so secret that the chiefs alone knew the clue to it."

"They carried cases of ammunition," continued the fair reader, "which they placed on broad boats for conveyance to the vessels in the offing, and all this without a word being spoken, except a few necessary orders, given almost in a whisper."

The reader sympathetically dropped her voice at these latter words.

As she did so, the loud, peculiar rap which Peter Wolff had given, sounded sharp and clear through the house.

The listener started up, and stood with eyes staring and open mouth, clatching at the arms of the chair for support.

Carla, as he had called the fair girl at his feet, startled by the noise, but alarmed only at the effect it produced upon her father, dropped the book, and half-rose to her feet.

There was a momentary pause.

Then, unannounced, Peter Wolff, with bloodshot eyes and colourless cheeks, wild, ragged, and disreputable, strode into the room.

"Who—who are you?" demanded the old man, staring helplessly at the intruder.

"That is not the question!" was the answer; "we do not ask of one another, 'who?' but 'what?'"

"Father!" cried Carla, gazing in terror at the un-availing apparition; "what does this man do here? Shall I ring?"

"No, no!" gasped the other; "there is no danger. Leave us, my darling, leave us. This gentleman—I recognize him now—has business with me. Private business, my love, which will not keep us long?"

He looked toward the intruder to confirm his statement.

"Not long—not more than a few minutes," said Wolff; then dropping his accustomed manner, and assuming the air of a refined and well-bred gentleman—oddly as that assimilated with his personal appearance—he added, addressing Carla; "I regret to trouble you, Miss Bruce, but my business is urgent and private. You will pardon me?"

He made her a bow, which a lord could not have surpassed, and she, re-assured, yet still reluctant to quit her father, slowly glided from the room.

Peter Wolff moved backward toward the door and looked it: then he advanced to the man who had risen from the chair, and bowing obsequiously, said:

"You are my superior in the third degree."

The man thus addressed trembled violently.

"You come to ask me to—?" he faltered.

"Rank is but another name for duty!" responded Wolff. "You know your rank. You know its privileges. I know that you are ready to discharge its duties, Roderick Bruce."

The man thus addressed dropped with a groan into the chair from which he had just risen.

"I know, I know!" he muttered, "but I am an old man. You see the frost of age is on me; it has eaten into my very bones. For twenty years I have not heard the sound I have heard to-night; for twenty years no whisper of action has reached me, and I believed that, with the necessities of the past which gave it birth, the action of the organization had ceased."

Peter Wolff burst into a laugh.

"Have tyrants ceased to oppress?" he asked.

"No, no!"

"And there are no longer peoples writhing beneath the heel of usurping dynasties?"

"It is not to be denied."

"And a army of liberty—have there ceased to be traitors in it?"

Roderick Bruce only buried his face in his hands and groaned.

"Why, then," demanded Peter Wolff, "should you deem that our functions are at an end? Here, in England, you sit at peace; but abroad the storm rages, none the less violently because its voice is hushed to your ears. And, believe me, the day is coming—is come—when those who hold rank among us will no longer wear it as an idle badge, but will be driven to exercise its functions or —"

He stopped, and a grim smile rested on his face.

"I know the penalty," said the old man, with a shudder, his face still hidden by his hands.

When, a second or two after, he looked up, Peter saw that the face raised to his was wet with tears.

"Do not mistake me," said Bruce, partly in an apologetic, partly in an explanatory tone, "but when you reach my age you will understand what I now feel and suffer. It is natural to youth to be hot and impatient. We find the world wrong somewhere—we hardly know how—and we seize the readiest means that looks like a lever to try and put it on its right track again. Years bring experience, and our enthusiasm cools. Years, too, bring on the apathy of age, and we cry, 'Let us alone; let us enjoy the bitter end of life and shape ourselves for the quiet of the grave.' That feeling has not come to you yet, but it will, and then you will appreciate the shock with which, after twenty years' rest, I hear again the cry which bids me draw the sword once more, only to dye it in human blood!"

"The sword of justice," replied the listener quietly.

Roderick Bruce made no answer.

Had he his doubts of it?

Had experience taught him that the vengeance of secret societies, like that to which he had indiscreetly allied himself in the old revolutionary times, is often only another name for crime?

Whatever his thoughts he knew well enough what his position demanded of him. He was not ignorant of the awful ties which bound together the men with whom he had once acted as a zealous leader, or of the doom they were not slow to pronounce on traitors to their cause.

So going to an iron cabinet, which apparently contained nothing more harmful than a collection of shells and minerals, he drew from under a sliding panel in the lid of it, a small, peculiar-looking book.

It was bound in a singular manner and with a strange material.

The material was human skin.

Small as it was, it was secured with two clasps, each secured by a lock.

The leaves of the book were of vellum. They were covered with writing in the Italian language. The characters had been formed not with ink, but with a fluid now of a faint, brownish tint. It looked as blood looks after long years.

"You have entered the names of the condemned as you have received them?" asked Wolff.

"Every one; but it is some time since the last was added."

"No matter. You have the name of Roland Estrid?"

"Yes."

"His doom?"

"Death! But already he has paid that penalty. Here is the cross against his name."

"The cross; but not the dagger?"

"No. He died of the cholera."

"And his son?"

"Is missing."

"He is found," cried Wolff, exultingly; "in two days I will bring him to you. You know the rest."

Again the limbs of the aged man shook as if with the effects of palsy.

"Is this inevitable?" he asked. "Think. That terrible code which made treachery punishable in the second, third—aye, even in the twentieth generation, was made at a time of peril and sheer necessity. But its object was not to slay the innocent: simply to appal the guilty. If it is your will to denounce, I must fulfil my duty also. But pause, reflect—what say you?"

"I denounce the son of Count Roland Estrid!"

Roderick Bruce heard his words, and with a groan closed the book, and returned it to its hiding-place.

Bowing lowly and reverently, Peter Wolff departed.

Then the old man fell upon his knees, and, clasping his brow, cried out in the anguish of his heart:

"Oh, my God! Forgive me, forgive me!"

It was in this posture that Carla Bruce, his beautiful daughter, found him.

CHAPTER XIII

MRS. LARKALL'S EVENING PARTY.

If you like such close relations

I'll have cousins close as you.

lover.

We are so weary—my heart and I.

E. B. Browning.

Thou com'st in such a questionable form

That I must speak to thee.

Shakespeare.

MRS. LARKALL knew the world. She prided herself on reading human nature like a book—a book, it may be remarked, in which there are many, many pages best left unread.

The scandal which Lolly Brettle's imprudence had given rise to, naturally alarmed her for the credit of the boarding-school. It might, it must, she knew, be talked about; and a less practical woman would have sat down and wrung her hands at the bare thought of the consequences.

Mrs. Larkall did nothing of the kind.

"One excitement swallows up another," she argued with herself. "The girls will never cease to talk of this adventure, unless I give them something more startling to talk about. That must be done."

So, the very next morning, the clever woman assembled her pupils in the principal class-room, and announced her intention to inaugurate the new "half"—in boarding-school language—with an evening party—in fact, a quiet ball. To this assembly, each pupil was to have permission to invite one or more friends, their names to be submitted to the lady proprietress that very day.

The proposal was received with immense satisfaction.

Rosa Merry wanted to give "three cheers and a little 'on in for the babies,'" as she had heard her brother Tom, a strapping young Shropshire squire, do at hunting breakfasts. And she would have led it too, but the overnight event had made the boarders timid, and they dispersed without that demonstration.

In the evening, the lists of proposed guests were handed in to Mrs. Larkall.

Without an exception the names were those of gentlemen, and the preponderance of cousins among the number showed how popular that form of relationship is among the fair sex, and to what an alarming extent it prevails.

Of course Gertrude Norman proposed to invite Roland Henshaw, and there was no objection to this on the part of Mrs. Larkall, though the young girl observed that the face of the lady grew very serious as she read the name.

Gertrude had noticed the same thing before. What did it mean? Why was there a secret intimacy between the schoolmistress and Roland? It was as difficult to the young girl to make out as it was for her to see why Mahala should be in such favour that, as the ayah had boasted, Mrs. Larkall released her with her own hand, and, at her request, permitted Lolly Brettle to escape the consequences of the audacious act which had threatened the very existence of the boarding-school.

The night of the party arrived.

It was a superb affair, quite worthy of the reputation the house enjoyed. In the way of decoration and provision, nothing had been spared. The principal drawing-room was devoted to dancing, the carpet having been taken up, the floor chalked in a pattern—colours red, white and blue—and the walls decorated with evergreens and paper-flowers in profusion.

The guests consisted chiefly of stately old dowagers and charming young men—the one class invited by Mrs. Larkall herself for prudential reasons; the other by the young ladies for reasons best known to themselves. Nearly all arrived early, for though a fashionable party it was a school-ball, and it was necessary to make that concession to the proprietress.

Gertrude Norman was dressed by Mahala, and looked charming.

She wore a dress of white atrophane, very ample, skirt flowing over skirt, and so presenting a floating, cloud-like aspect, far more effective than any arrangement of flounces, which simply break up the lines of beauty and serve to shorten and vulgarise the wearer. The upper skirt was looped up over her left knee with a single camelia, parti-coloured, red and white, shining, wax-like, in the midst of its glossy leaves. A cluster of three camelias of like colours reposed upon her bosom. Beyond these flowers and a single bracelet of pearls upon one arm, Gertrude wore as-

ther jewellery nor ornament of any kind, her profuse black locks hanging in a tangled mass, half-uncoured, about her head, and constituting her chief ornament.

Before the ball commenced Gertrude was ready. "He will come early," Mahala had said, choking over the words.

"Will he?"

"If he loves you."

Ah, then indeed, there was no fear but that he would be there among the first! So Gertrude thought, and it was but natural that she should do so. Hidden in her heart, like a bird in its nest, was the promise, the proof of sincerity which he had offered her when they last met. She was to be his wife. That was his own test of the truth of his affection. Publicly or secretly, he was prepared to make her his for life. And, doubtless, to-night, he would whisper to her the arrangements he had made, and settle every detail of that bright future now opening to her feet. Yet the ball opened and Roland Hershaw did not come!

The dark beauty sat in her room, watching and watching.

Every one that arrived, every knock at the door, every name shouted by the stentorian lungs of the footman, sent a thrill through her frame. And when, as time passed, the calls were fewer, the knocks less frequent, and the hoarse footman had ample time to quench his burning throat between each announcement, Gertrude crouched down before the fire, cold and wretched and sick at heart.

Mahala, stealing to the door at intervals, looked in and saw her victim as she knelt, the fire-light glowing red upon her glossy locks and her ivory shoulders, and the sight filled her with inexpressible satisfaction.

"No fear, no fear, but he will be among the first!" she muttered to herself, sneering and pointing with her fingers. "He does not love her. He cannot. Some day he shall hate her—hate her as I do, with her leprous white skin. And she my mistress, and I her slave!"

That thought seemed too much for the ayah's endurance, and each time that it came over her, it seemed to quiver through her whole body, as she stole away to her duties.

"Mr. Roland Hershaw!"

So, at last, shouted the hoarse footman, and Gertrude started to her feet at the sound, rigid and death-like; the next moment the hot blood tingled in her ears, and suffused her glowing bosom, and she flew, rather than walked, down the stairs to meet her lover.

From one of the landings of the well staircase she looked down, and saw him standing in the hall. His face was towards her, and she involuntarily started at the expression upon it.

Evidently the young man was annoyed and angry, and the cloud of passion resting on his brow gave him the aspect of a demon rather than a man.

Gertrude did not know what had happened.

She could not tell that Peter Wolff had broken his appointment, upon which so much depended, had kept Roland waiting and waiting until he was almost ashamed to present himself at the house, since it had grown so late.

As little could she guess the thoughts that were passing in his mind—filling up the pauses of the "curses not loud but deep," which he did not fail to launch at the devoted head of his accomplice.

"Worst of all," he said to himself, as he stood there. "I've no clue to shape my conduct by toward this girl. If Wolf serves my purpose, and helps me to the old man's money, the sooner I break off this fooling the better, or I may go too far even for Mrs. Larkall. But if he is playing me false, then he must be sacrificed, and this is my winning card. What's a fellow to do?"

Before he had made up his mind, he was conscious of a vision of beauty floating down toward him, and Gertrude Norman stood by his side.

"Roland!" she cried; "I was so fearful that you might not come!"

"Why, darling, it would only have left you the more leisure to cultivate the attentions of other swains. You are charming to-night. The belle of the ball-room, I'm sure. You've left me one little dance though, I hope? You're not fully engaged, are you?"

"Oh, Roland!" was the answer. "Do you think I could dance, and you not here? No! I've not entered the room yet. Come, you will take me in?"

Roland's brow lowered.

It was not his policy to commit himself so far with Gertrude that retreat would be impracticable. So he drew back for a moment, thinking what he should do to evade the proposed honour.

Gertrude mistook the motive of the action.

"Ah, you have something to say to me first, Roland?" she whispered.

"I? No; nothing."

"Nothing?"

She said it reproachfully, and her low brow contracted; it was easy to see that she was hurt and disappointed.

"Nothing more than I have already said, Gertrude," the young man added as he perceived this. "What did you expect?"

She could not answer as her mind prompted her. It would have been indelicate even to hint at the promised marriage. Yet she was sorely disappointed that Roland had no word to say upon it. Why he was silent, we know well enough; but she did not. In answer to the question, therefore, she merely said:

"I—I—hardly know. Something might have happened. Come, let us go in."

And she gathered up the skirts of her dress with one hand, and, taking Roland's arm with the other, left him no alternative but to escort her into the ball-room.

It was a pretty sight. When is a ballroom not? From a careful comparison of the opinions of young lady friends, aye, and young gentleman friends, too, for the matter of that, I have arrived at the conclusion that they regard a ballroom as the nearest approach to Elysium that we moderns have yet attained. Delightful, it certainly is, to see youth and beauty at their best, and radiant with the only elixir that can add a charm to either—the elixir of happiness. If there was a special charm about the ballroom at Mrs. Larkall's, it arose from the fact that for the most part those present were young and unsophisticated, and the joy which irradiated their faces was but the reflection of the innocence which filled their hearts.

"And this in spite of the cousins?" you ask.

Yes, in spite of the cousins.

The entrance of Roland Hershaw, with Gertrude on his arm, created a marked sensation, far too marked to please the young man at that moment. It was not because he looked so handsome in his evening dress, or because half the men envied him the lovely being at his side. But the whisper had gone round that they were "engaged," and to be engaged is, in a boarding-school, the most delightful, the most interesting and romantic of positions.

Mrs. Larkall herself rose to receive the young couple, to the great disgust of poor Snaggs, who, by virtue of his office, acted as master of the ceremonies on this occasion. These marked attentions were, he held, contrary to etiquette; but then the little man with the dyed hair and irritated skin, hated anybody and everybody who was specially favoured by Mrs. Larkall.

The joke in the school went, that poor Snaggs was even jealous of the pet pupils.

As time went on, the cloud which had rested from the first on Roland's brow began to clear away; Gertrude also lost that weariness of heart, which even the presence of her lover had failed to remove, though why she could not tell. The exhilaration of the gay and fascinating scene produced its natural effect on those present, and those who could not enjoy the reality yet presented the semblance of happiness.

In the midst of the enjoyment the servant appeared at the open door, and watching his opportunity, when Mrs. Larkall was disengaged, went up and whispered to her.

"A gentleman?" she inquired in an under-tone.

"Yes."

"A friend of Mr. Hershaw's?"

"An old friend, ma'am."

"Well, I will speak to Mr. Hershaw when this set is over; or stay, you may as well show him in. Any friend of his is welcome."

The man bowed and retired.

The set finished, the ladies were led to their seats. Roland was in the act of resigning Gertrude to Mrs. Larkall, when, chancing to look up, he perceived an apparition which turned him to stone.

At that moment the servant was in the act of bowing into the room a gentlemanly-looking man. Yet the instant Roland's glance fell upon the face of the intruder, he recognized it.

The man was Peter Wolff.

Not the ragged, dissolute, poverty-stricken Peter Wolff we have seen. No: the face was the same, but in all other respects he was utterly changed. He wore an elegant evening suit of black, with an open waistcoat, revealing a handsome shirt-front. His necktie was white; a gold chain and charms dangled from his waistcoat pocket; his hair had been cut and curled, and parted down the middle, in the latest mode; above all, he wore white kid gloves, that fitted him to a nicety.

The gentleman is usually distinguished from the commoner by his gloves. They fit him, and he arrives with them on—never puts them on in the street, or slides one great, beefy hand into the remaining one in the hall, or in the corner of a ballroom.

In this crowning respect the new arrival was perfect. As he stepped into the ballroom, the servant, in spite of his increasing hoarseness, shouted out the name clearly and distinctly.

"Mr. Peter Roydon Palmer!" he announced.

The effect of that announcement was magical.

Mrs. Larkall, who had risen to receive the stranger as a friend of Hershaw's, stood, with staring eyes, open mouth, and uplifted hands. It seemed as if the name, simple as it was, had stunned her.

Upon Hershaw himself it had produced simply a violent outburst of rage, and he moved towards the intruder with flashing eyes and clenched hands.

There was one other person whose emotion at the announcement must not pass unnoticed. This was no other than Mahala, the ayah, who, chancing to be near the door, and overhearing the name, staggered back, and clutched at the balusters for support.

Meanwhile Hershaw walked straight up to Peter Wolff.

"What do you do here, Wolff?" he asked angrily. "Palmer," suggested the other.

"How dare you betray my confidence by assuming that name?" demanded the one.

"Assuming! I like that. It's my own name."

"Take care," said Roland, "take care. This is beyond a joke. Here, of all places, you expose both yourself and myself to danger."

"How?"

"Because there is a chance of the very man you seek to personate being known here, fool. There are eyes here that may have seen the original."

"So much the better."

"How?"

"I say so much the better. If they know the original, they will know me. I am the original."

(To be continued.)

A HEART TO CHERISH ME.

I ASK not fame's emblazoned crest,

Nor seek I gold—I ask for more:

I ask a heart whereon to rest

When I am sad. Ah! envied store.

I ask not troops of friends, to share

The hours when fancy would be free;

But when my soul's oppressed with care,

I ask a heart to cherish me.

And when sweet peace beams o'er my way,

Thrice should the joy reflect again

Into that loving, beaming eye

That smiles my joy and feels my pain.

A heart that thrills for me alone,

And gives but me the sweet caress,

Should never pine for love's low tone,

My life would strive his own to bless.

L. H.

CURRENTS.—Dried currants of commerce, as they are misnamed, are in reality a grape, and free from stones or pits; they come from the Isthmus of Corinth, and several places in the Indian Archipelago. A small Spanish currant is sometimes sold in their stead. It is the island of Zante which furnishes the largest amount of these currants, and their cultivation is materially lessening, as the jealousy of the Ottomans does not allow large vessels to enter the gulf for their purchase. These currants grow on vines like grapes; the leaves are somewhat the same figure, and the grapes similar; they are gathered in August, and dried on the ground; when keged they are trodden down closely with the feet. Zante island produces enough to load five or six large vessels; Cephalonia three or four, and other islands one.

Mrs. PENN died at her residence at Innerleithen, in her 107th year, on the 14th ult. She was born at Port Glasgow on the 31st of December, 1757, but when quite young she accompanied her family to Edinburgh, where she resided about sixty years, staying first with her father, Mr. McGeorge, a baker, who presided as master of St. Stephen's Lodge of Freemasons, Edinburgh, on the occasion of Burns being installed as its poet-laureate. She afterwards opened a shop for ladies' wares in the Royal Exchange, which she kept for a number of years. She declined all offers of marriage till she was upwards of sixty years of age, when she gave her hand to Mr. Penn, builder of Edinburgh, whom she has survived eighteen years. Dating her birth from the reign of George II., she was personally cognizant of many events which are known to those of the present day only as matters of history. She saw the ships of the notorious John Paul Jones retire from the Forth in 1779, and was present at Kirkcaldy when Mr. Shirra offered up his prayer for tempestuous winds to defeat the object of that pirate's mission. She witnessed the burning of the Roman Catholic bishop's dwelling-house, and other buildings in Edinburgh, by the populace in 1780; and for a time she kept as relics some trifles which she picked up from among the ruins. When a girl she walked once or twice from Glasgow to Paisley to hear the famous George Whitefield; and she afterwards made the acquaintance in Edinburgh of the still more famous John Wesley.

Throughout the whole of her long life she never had a professional visit from a doctor, having stoutly refused to accept of medical attendance to the last. She was able to walk in her garden till the approach of the present winter, when her health began to give way. Her mental faculties, which were naturally good and had been well cultivated, remained unimpaired till the end, except that during the last few weeks her mind occasionally wandered a little.

THE GHOST OF THE TOWER.

CHAPTER I

THE old house at Chorley Cliffs had a tenant at last. An invalid lady with an only daughter desired a seaside residence for the summer, and hearing of this secluded mansion, applied by letter. As her references were satisfactory, and the rent offered in advance, Mr. Harton congratulated himself on his good fortune, and sent some workmen to render the place habitable.

It was a crazy, rambling, dilapidated moss-grown affair, not bearing on its crest that odour of sanctity considered desirable in a well-organized community.

Old Captain Chorley, its founder, had been a seafaring man all his days. Wonderful legends were still related about him. It had never definitely been settled whether his vessel was a slaver, or worse yet, one of the few remaining privateers that still occasionally scoured the ocean. She came and went in secrecy; the sparse population on the northern end of Long Island at that period, the many little bays and harbours, and the different crafts constantly passing at that point, rendered evasion an easy matter.

Whatever his business might be, he increased in wealth, purchased a large tract of land, and built the castle-like structure on a jut of rocky ground overhanging the sea. Much and varied taste had been displayed on both exterior and interior; but now the windows had fallen in, the grey stone had begun to crumble in several places, storms had found their way through roofs and crevices, despoiling carved wainscoting, painted ceilings and curious furniture that might have been imported from every quarter of the globe.

During one of his expeditions Captain Chorley had married, and on his return a wife and child were added to the treasures already stowed away in the prison-like mansion. A few of the gentry called on Mrs. Chorley, but she did not seem disposed to be friendly with her neighbours. The fishermen's wives remembered seeing her walk up and down the beach below the house, pale and trembling, leading a little boy who clung timidly to her, and never strayed off to play.

After awhile another son was added to the family, and this event was succeeded by Mrs. Chorley's death. The old, forbidding-looking servant brought up the children until they were old enough to accompany their father to sea, as he seemed to desire this mode of existence even after he had acquired a fortune.

At twenty-five, Harold, the elder, married a tall, handsome Spanish West Indian, relinquished his roving life, and turned farmer on his father's estate.

Captain Chorley's death occurred at sea, of a malignant fever he had contracted at an unhealthy port. Throughout his illness he had raved continually of a will and a casket locked up in the tower. This had been built on the side overlooking the bay, and being much higher than the house, it was said a light used to be placed in it whenever the captain was expected home. Indeed, he had furnished up one room as a private library and study, and on the return of the younger son with the sad tidings, immediate search was made throughout this apartment for the document, but in vain. There was but little love between Mrs. Chorley and her brother-in-law, and when, after escrimos, heavy, cumbersome chests, and all manner of out-of-the-way places had been hunted through, she came down the stone steps one morning with a haughty, triumphant face, holding up to the brothers a casket of cedar-wood, curiously bound with brass, whose lustre was sadly tarnished, a bitter, suspicious thought flashed up in Vincent's heart.

She described with some degree of ostentation the spot where she had found it—an old closet quite distinct from the study. She also insisted upon the lawyer being called in before it was opened. This was a Mr. Harton, a young attorney who had been in the village scarcely a year.

Vincent Chorley sat in sullen silence, a strange premonition of coming evil shivering through his whole frame. He was hardly surprised when he found his brother possessor of the house and farm, and a generous income, beside which his seemed a mere pittance. The ship was bequeathed to him, but it was old and unseaworthy; beside, Vincent had no greater love for a seafaring life than his brother. Consequently his disappointment was great, and high words passed be-

tween them. Mrs. Chorley's attempts at pacification were made with an evident desire of widening the breach, and the quarrel ended by an angry separation.

Vincent sold his vessel, embarked in mercantile pursuits, married, and at his death bequeathed his heritage of hatred to his son.

Harold died childless, and a year afterward Mrs. Chorley surprised every one by bestowing her hand upon Lawyer Harton, who was still poor, and several years her junior. The fortune had been left to her without a single restriction. A new house was built, and two daughters added to the family circle, but it was rumoured Mr. and Mrs. Harton did not lead a happy life. He certainly held some secret power over her, at which she chafed and grew mutinous, and at these seasons carried her head more loftily than ever, looking down upon him with undisguised contempt.

One morning she went out, and not having returned by evening, her husband went to seek her among the neighbours, while two of the servants set forth to explore the old house. Ascending the tower, they found her in the study, seated before a table, in the attitude of writing. Her eyes were staring into space with a fixed, stony glance; the pen had fallen from her hand; she was white and cold. Death had come for her in this solitude, and his summons was inexorable.

On the paper lying before her were traced these words: "I, Juanita Chorley Harton, being in full possession of my senses, do hereby declare to all the world that —" But whatever secret she had on her soul went into eternity with her. No traces of unfair dealing were found upon her, and she was buried with a great show of respect by Mr. Harton.

The mysterious death caused intense excitement, and Chorley Cliffs soon began to have quite a respectable ghost of its own.

Another incident occurred, to give it still greater notoriety. Allingham Chorley, the only survivor of the family, a tall, fine-looking young man, came into the neighbourhood, and demanded the privilege of searching the old stone house. Without directly accusing any one, he boldly declared his grandfather's will had never been found, or else destroyed.

For the first day Mr. Harton followed his steps like a shadow, much as he dreaded to enter the hated mansion. At evening some sharp words passed between them, and whether it was a premeditated assault, or an accident of the moment, could not be clearly made out, but Mr. Harton was precipitated over the edge of the declivity into the water below, and rescued by some fishermen in a small boat. He immediately made a deposition against Allingham Chorley, charging him with forcibly throwing him from the cliff, with intent to murder him.

At first the young man laughed, and declared with cool audacity that Mr. Harton had plunged into the bay himself; but when he saw matters assuming a serious aspect, and a warrant issued for his arrest, decided flight to be the wiser course. Mr. Harton seemed quite delighted at thus being rid of his adversary.

No one cared to live in the old house, so it had gone on falling to ruin. For several seasons Mr. Harton had advertised it for a summer residence, but with no success; consequently he was delighted to find a tenant now.

The work of renovating went on rapidly. By the first of May a sufficient number of rooms were in order, and Mrs. Bertrand, her daughter and servant came to take possession. Mr. Harton brought his eldest child over to call upon the ladies. Miss Harton was tall, haughty, and very mature-looking for seventeen. The union of races in this case had not increased the power of beauty. With her mother's dark complexion, Miss Harton inherited her father's steely gray eyes and brown hair; her features were regular, yet lacked warmth and spirit, but her figure was undeniably fine. She looked five years older than Dora Bertrand, who was her senior by a few months. The young people did not assimilate very readily; indeed Dora was almost frightened by her guest's state and demeanour.

"I am very glad we shall not live here always," she said to her mother, after the visitors had gone. "I am sure, if Miss Harton is a sample of the young ladies, I shall find very few pleasant acquaintances. And, somehow, I cannot like Mr. Harton a bit, although he is so anxious for our comfort."

"Do not judge too soon," responded Mrs. Bertrand. "There is another sister for us to see; she may be different."

And different she certainly was. They met her when they went to return the call; her sister being absent, she was compelled to play the hostess. She was a brunette, and though possessing neither the fine figure or regular features of the elder, more than made up the lack by her vivacity and gay good-humour. Mrs. Bertrand was really glad, for Dora's sake, that they had found so companionable a young lady, and warmly invited her to make herself no stranger at the Cliffs.

Olive Harton was no less delighted with the prospect of so pleasant a friend. Not, indeed, that she suffered from loneliness, for she was welcome at many a fireside where Mr. Harton and Clara would not have deigned to show themselves. Yet amongst the people who visited the house Olive found few to her liking, and both father and sister frowned down any attempt on her part to establish a circle of her own.

As Mrs. Bertrand found it impossible to procure a piano in the neighbourhood, and judged it too great a distance to have hers removed for the few months they expected to spend in the country, she accepted Mr. Harton's proposal that Dora should come over daily and practice with Olive; and this led to a complete intimacy. Olive resembled her father and sister as little in character as in person. Cool, calculating, suspicious, and stealthy, Mr. Harton seemed ever on the look-out lest some one should gain an advantage over him; while Olive was frank, free and careless to a fault. There was not a trace of pride or haughtiness in her, and many of the village people who shrank from her sister, brightened into smiles when her merry face appeared at the doorway.

Mrs. Bertrand was not at all surprised as she saw the girls rushing in eagerly, one afternoon, their faces flushed with rapid walking, and heard Dora exclaim:

"Oh, mamma, Olive has the key to the tower, and we are going up to explore it. She says almost every one believes its haunted; and Dora gave a gay, bird-like laugh.

"I'm so glad you are not afraid of ghosts, Mrs. Bertrand," Olive said, crossing the room to kiss her. "It's so nice to have you and Dora live in this old house; but no one would ever come before, they were all so afraid of its being haunted."

"A very foolish belief, my dear," returned Mrs. Bertrand, in that placid tone which most people use to iterate old truths that few trouble themselves to examine.

"Come, Dora!" and Olive led the way.

They crossed the wide hall and entered a small passage. The tower, although joined to the main building, was quite separate from it interiorly. There were more rooms in the house than Mrs. Bertrand cared to use, so nothing had been said about the tower, further than that Mr. Harton had informed her it was kept as a sort of storeroom for useless rubbish. More than once Dora had evinced a restless curiosity concerning it; and Jane, the domestic, had speculated considerably about the ghost, and wondered why Mr. Harton kept the premises so closely locked.

The two girls had to use their utmost strength to turn the key, and as the door slowly opened it displayed a wide stone staircase thick with dust, over which floated a few filmy bars of sunshine from a window higher up. The damp, musty odour and strange silence awed them a little, but quickly recovering themselves, they began to ascend.

At this first landing, a door opened into a room, and a narrow flight of stairs beside it ran up to the next story, which was much smaller, and from thence to a third, which was contracted into a mere observatory.

The windows in all the stories were deep set and narrow, full of cobwebs, and the panes of glass broken in many places. Some old chests, dilapidated chairs, and several pieces of antiquated furniture were strewed around, while the so-called study contained many curiosities which might have been valuable in any other place. But now they were so covered with dust and mould as to be scarcely distinguishable.

The girls ran to every window for a view of the surrounding prospect, and vainly tried to find a way through the roof to the cupola with which the tower was crowned. It was evident, from the steps leading to it, that it had once been used. "Failing in this, they returned to the study.

"Here was where they found my mother," said Olive, standing by the table and pointing to the high-backed chair.

Dora shivered a little as the picture presented itself to her mind. All the long summer day, Mrs. Chorley had sat there, never heeding the sunshine or the darkness of purple twilight slowly deepening into night. Dora had seen her portrait, and the vivid girlish imagination conjured her up again, until she could almost seem to see her. More to break the spell of terror that was creeping over her, than to gain any real information, Dora said:

"Was she not writing something?"

"Yes," replied Olive. "Old Persis, who used to live with mother when she was Mrs. Chorley, and was afterwards our nurse, came over that night to search for her. Papa was very angry, and discharged her when she said mother meant to make known some secret about the will."

"Suppose some day another will should be found?" The true will, Dora was on the point of adding, for Jane inclined to the belief with which old Persis had stunted the neighbourhood; and in spite of her love for Olive, Dora had always experienced a leaning that way.

"Oh, it couldn't be," returned Olive. "Grandfather said they would find his will in the tower; and even uncle, who was so very angry, could not disprove it. If he had found it, instead of mother, I suppose he wouldn't have said a word. Only Persis says he loved Uncle Vincent the better, and it is strange he should give him so little, and leave all the rest to his other son. There are portraits of them here in this old closet: let us take a look at them."

After pulling out several articles, and making such a dash that they were almost stifled, they came to the pictures—old oil-paintings, that, though much injured by time and want of care, still preserved a tolerable likeness.

"This was Mr. Harold Chorley," said Olive, "and that Uncle Vincent. I don't know why I call him so—he was no real relation to me, and it always makes papa angry. Yet I cannot help feeling sorry for him."

Both were portraits of young men—the elder dark, stern, with piercing jetty eyes, and an abundance of black, curling hair.

The other was much fairer, with hair of a rich chestnut, and laughing eyes of a most indescribable hue. The whole face wore a frank, generous expression, a happy light-heartedness, that won Dora in an instant.

"I believe I like Mr. Vincent Chorley's the better," she said.

"Oh, I do, a great deal. And old Persis, who saw his son, said they were exactly alike. You know Mr. Allingham came after mother's death. Clara and I went back to school immediately, so we did not see him."

"Did he really try to murder your papa?"

"Certainly. Poor fellow, I suppose he was very angry. I wonder what has become of him? It is seven years since he was here."

Dora could not keep her sympathies from straying to the outcast. She had not at all recovered from her first dislike to Mr. Harton, and it seemed to her so much more natural and right that a descendant of the family should inherit its privileges in preference to those who could claim only the merest shadow of relationship. Yet she could not express these thoughts to her friend, and so the conversation soon turned to other themes, and presently they went down to have a talk with Mrs. Bertrand about ghosts.

Olive staid to tea, and shortly after dusk a servant was sent for her. When Jane was making all safe for the night, she came to the little parlour where Dora sat reading alone, as her mother always retired early, and exclaimed:

"Oh, Miss Dora, the tower door is open!"

The young girl sprang up half-terrified the first instant, then laughing away her fear said:

"Olive must have forgotten to lock it. I thought it was fast, and she had taken the key with her."

"But you won't think of sleeping without first having that shut? Come, let us go lock it."

"I do believe you are afraid, Jane. We have lived here two months, and no ghost has made its appearance. Did you suppose it fastened up in the tower?"

"Don't laugh, Miss Dora. I'm not so sure after all there isn't something of the sort. I don't see how that woman could rest in her grave with such a burden on her mind. I should not be at all surprised to see her come walking down-stairs some day, with the true will in her hand."

"Hush, Jane. Mamma says it is wrong to pay so much attention to gossip. Olive's mother couldn't have forged a will, and Mr. Harton, you know, had been in the village only a short time. Probably it is all right. You'll have to turn this key, though; the lock is rusted. There, good-night, ghost!"

The fearless child laughed lightly as they returned to the parlour, eliciting Jane's warmest admiration for her bravery. After the servant left her, the book dropped listlessly from her hands, and she fell into a reverie about Allingham Chorley and his father, whose portrait had made so deep an impression on her mind.

The next day Olive came over to announce that she was going to travel with her father and sister, and would probably be absent a month. The maid was packing, and they expected to start early the next morning. Dora was really sorry to lose her companion, but when the impulsive Olive declared she had half a mind to stay at home, she would not listen a moment to such a proposition.

"Let me bring you the key of the tower," Dora said, when they had kissed good-bye for the third or fourth time. "You left it last night."

"Oh, no matter; I'll bequeath it to you for a few weeks, and if you see the ghost, don't fail to tell me."

Dora promised.

She found herself very lonesome in the days that first followed Olive's departure. She took her walk regularly over to Mr. Harton's for her music, but it

was dull work. Frequently she would pause in her playing, and study the picture that hung above the piano—the likeness of the Spanish woman when she was Mrs. Chorley. There was a later portrait of her, but this first interested Dora most. The resolute, haughty eyes; the lips set together with a firmness that indicated great power, and the strange unconquerableness written on every feature. Gazing at her, it was impossible not to dream over her story. The woman who supplied Mrs. Bertrand with butter and garden vegetables was a daughter-in-law of the old woman who had been Mrs. Chorley's servant so long.

Since her quarrel with Mr. Harton, Persis had been especially bitter against all the family save Miss Olive, whom she loved tenderly. Jane, being a newcomer in the place, and rather disposed for gossip, was quite an acquisition to her. On her part, Jane retailed her information to Dora, who soon understood the family history perfectly well. Persis declared Mrs. Chorley had never been the same woman after her second marriage, and that she felt assured Mr. Harton had managed to entangle her in some villainy, or he could never have ruled her so completely. "You should've seen how she carried her head in Mr. Chorley's time," the old woman would generally conclude with.

It appeared singular to Dora that Mr. Harton should wish to remain in a place where he was regarded with so much suspicion, when he had ample means to enable him to live elsewhere. As Mrs. Bertrand preferred the quiet of her room much of the time, Dora was left to her own speculations and amusements, and having little else to occupy her attention, had become deeply interested in the history connected with Chorley Cliffs. Now she visited the old tower daily. Her nature was not superstitious or fearful, and the many curious relics there pleased her greatly.

CHAPTER II

It was a bright night with a full moon. Dora had lain awake a long while, listening to the ticking of the clock, the regular breathing of her mother, and the heavier respiration of Jane. The sleeping apartments were on the side toward the tower, nearly all the rooms being on one floor, as the house itself was low. Many a time vague imaginations had floated through Dora's mind, and even now she could not refrain from going over the old story. Then a crash of something startled her, a smothered sound, as if it came through walls, and in the direction of the tower.

With senses painfully acute, she sat upright in bed, and strove to catch another token of real or imaginary intruders. In vain. Only the sleepers on either hand broke the perfect stillness, and presently the voice of her mother, requiring some trifling attention. So she composed herself to sleep again, but the incident recurred to her in the morning, and immediately after breakfast she set out to explore the tower, her heart beating with quite a new emotion.

The neighbourhood was extremely quiet, and at this point quite thickly settled, so it was hardly possible any one would attempt to enter such an old place where no valuables were kept. She ascended the steps slowly, and on reaching the second floor took a comprehensive survey.

The study looked as usual; not a thing had been disturbed. Raising her eyes, they rested on a window overlooking the main house; the sash seemed to her displaced, and several new panes of glass missing. Following out the suggestion, her eyes wandered to the floor, which was strewn with numerous fragments. Her first impulse was to fly down-stairs and give the alarm; then she reflected a moment.

Might not the wind—but no, there had been scarcely a breath the preceding night, certainly not enough to dislodge the window-frame. She drew a chair to the wall, and climbing up, took hold of it. Yes, it was loose. There seemed traces of a recent disarrangement, finger-marks in the dust, and the disturbance of moths and spiders that had built homes for themselves in the corners. The window had evidently fallen out; this was the noise she had heard in the night. If it had lain there on the floor she would not have felt a whit disturbed, but it must have been put back by human agency. What could any one hope to gain after effecting such an entrance?

Dora knew it would not do to needlessly disturb her mother and Jane. They were comfortably situated; the quiet and retirement satisfied Mrs. Bertrand completely, and her health had improved visibly since her coming to Chorley Cliffs. It would be unfortunate to leave it just now, and impossible to stay unless the mystery was solved, or shared with some one. Jane would make a poor confidant; indeed, no persuasions could induce her to enter the tower, so she would be of no assistance in case of a search. Oh,

If Olive were only here! And then Dora thought her wisest plan would be to go down-stairs and lock the tower door, leaving the old place alone with its secret. So she rose and went slowly toward the door, and then, gathering courage, peeped in the closet which was partially open. No pallid ghost or burly form of midnight burglar met her view; only the bright, cheerful face of Vincent Chorley, that seemed ready to banter her out of her fears.

For many moments she stood irresolute, then made a hasty examination of the place. It was not possible for any one to be concealed there. What if she were mistaken after all? Perhaps Olive might have taken the window out, and the noise in the night might have proceeded from some other cause. She went cautiously around the study—it was quite reassuring to find nothing unusual there.

Then she entered the passage, and considered whether she should go down or up. It would be an advantage to satisfy herself thoroughly; then she could not be in momentary fear of causing her mother some sudden alarm.

Without any positive mental decision, she began to mount the steps slowly, and on reaching the top drew a long breath of satisfaction.

The morning sun poured through the eastern window in golden floods—the whole place was full of filmy radiance.

How Dora Bertrand first became aware she was not the only inmate of that place, she can hardly tell. It was a vague impression at first, something shadowy and almost imperceptible, then it grew into a fear, and next a reality.

Spell-bound by terror, her own respiration seemed almost to stop, while every instant the other's breathing became more regular and distinct. The intruder was certainly asleep. There was but one place shielded from her observation, the quaint carved wooden settle, whose high back was towards her.

It seemed hours before she could command sufficient strength to take another step, so slowly passed these dull moments of terror.

At length the point was reached, and she saw—something real and physical, but not the generally received idea of a housebreaker.

A young man of six or eight and twenty, in a careless but graceful position, one arm under his head for a pillow, the other drooping over the edge of the settle, and displaying a firm white hand that would not have shamed a lady.

His hair and beard were of a sunny brown, the upper part of his broad forehead clear and fair as a girl's, but the rest of his face many shades darker, the fervent colour of the sun's tropical touch. It was a handsome, manly countenance, and losing her fear, she began to consider where she had seen it before.

A pleasant, familiar face, one on which she could place the smile, and remember precisely how the eyes would look when the drooping lids were raised. Where could she have seen it? She had no fear of it now, and longed impatiently for him to awake.

He seemed in no hurry, though; but presently the sun rays began to steal over his face, and then he stretched, yawned, and began slowly to open his eyes.

They did not rest on Dora Bertrand for some moments, however, and then he sat upright suddenly, as if he had received an electric shock, his face growing perceptibly paler every instant. She stood quite still, unable to speak or fly.

"Are you Olive Harton?" he asked, at length, in a constrained tone.

"No." She remembered, then, how she had come to know the face so well, and added, "but you are Allingham Chorley."

"I cannot deny it," he said, with a haughty gesture, "and I may be confessing to friend—or foe."

There was a silence of some seconds; then he began:

"How did you come here this morning?"

"I live in this house," and Dora lounged to add something more assuring, yet scarcely knew what to say.

"Indeed!" he said, in a surprised tone. "I thought the house was empty. I did not know Mr. Harton would dare to let it; and there was a perceptible sneer on his lip and in his voice."

"We came here in May," Dora added.

"I was here in March, and heard then it had never been tenanted. Mr. Harton is at home, of course?"

"No, the family are all away, and will not return in several days."

"I must beg you to pardon me," he said rising, "for thus entering your solitude. If I had been aware of your residing here, or of Mr. Harton's absence, I should not have chosen this course. There are reasons why I do not care to have my presence here known; yet, believe me, I would not, on any account, have disturbed or alarmed you. May I trust that I have not given you too severe a fright?"

Dora could not but smile at thus finding herself in familiar terms with a person who, a short half-year ago, was the object of her deepest solicitude and fear.

As if interpreting the smile, he held out his hand frankly, and said, in deep, honest tones, that carried faith with them:

"Let us be friends. I need a friend here sadly, for I am an unwilling alien in the house of my fathers. I will prove to you some day that I am not utterly unworthy of confidence."

Dora took the proffered hand. He seemed so little like a stranger, that in a few moments she found herself relating not only the event that had disturbed her midnight quiet, but many incidents concerning the Hartons; and he, in turn, when he found she knew the episode of his supposed attempt on Mr. Harton's life, related what had befallen him since.

He had spent five years in a mercantile house. Now the business had passed into other hands, on account of the death of his employer, and, finding a lull in his hitherto busy life, he had determined to come to Chorley Cliffs, and, if possible, take a thorough search for the lost will.

"On my return last March, I came out here for a few hours, and satisfied myself a little as to matters concerning the house. I concluded my safest course would be to gain the tower unknown to any one. Its reputation of being haunted might favour me a little, I thought. I reached the next town below here in time to obtain my supper, and shortly afterwards started to walk hither. The night was so beautiful that I loitered on the way, consequently I did not arrive here until the lights were out, and not dreaming of the place being inhabited, proceeded at once to gain entrance. I tried two of the doors below, and found them fastened, as I supposed I should; then I mounted the roof, and finding the woodwork of the window partially decayed, with the aid of my knife, soon forced an entrance. I should have been more careful had I supposed the noise would alarm any one. And now, what is my sentence to be for thus feloniously entering your residence? Please be a little merciful."

"It was not my house," returned Dora, with a smile, "so I may be lenient. But do you really hope to find the will?"

"My father died in the positive belief there was a will hidden away somewhere. His brother's wife found hers in a closet in the room below, a place he had searched through vainly; indeed, he felt well convinced she must first have put it there. Mr. Harton acted very suspiciously, I think, after his wife's death. He was not at all willing for me to enter the tower. Now, if he felt really satisfied as to my grandfather's will, why should he object to any search I might like to make? My present purpose is to penetrate every conceivable nook or possible hiding-place, that is, if I can gain your mother's permission to stay here awhile."

Dora remained talking until she heard Jane's voice calling her to her morning's duties. Promising to arrange for an interview between Mr. Chorley and her mother, she ran down, received a small scolding from the impatient Jane, who wondered what she could find in that old ghost tower to interest her so much. She read awhile to her mother, and then assisted Jane with the dinner, finding no time for the conversation she had promised herself. However, Jane was going to spend the afternoon with a sick neighbour, and when Dora saw her walk down the garden path in all the glory of clean dress and white apron, she took out her sewing, and sat down beside her mother with a satisfied smile.

"Mamma," she began, after a considerable silence, "do you think it would be wrong for Mr. Chorley to come here and search for his grandfather's will?"

"Why, no, child," said Mrs. Bertrand.

"But you knew he could not do it openly, on account of his former trouble with Mr. Harton. So he would have to remain concealed, and work quietly. Should you disapprove very much of such a course?"

"It is not likely he will come, Dora. Why do you seem so interested?"

"I think he will, mamma; indeed, I have seen him!"

Mrs. Bertrand gave a sudden start, glancing around almost as if she expected to see him too.

"Where is he?" she asked. "Surely not in the village? It is well Mr. Harton is away."

"He is here in this house, or rather in the tower, and wishes to see you."

"To see me? When did he come? Are you sure it is he, Dora?"

"Quite sure; he looks so like the picture of his father. And now, do not be frightened, mamma, while I tell you the whole story;" and Dora came and knelt beside her mother, while she repeated the incidents of the morning, leaving out much of the alarm she had experienced.

Mrs. Bertrand was greatly surprised, and quite undecided what course to pursue, but Dora pleaded so warmly in Mr. Chorley's behalf, that she at length said:

"I think we might manage it but for Jane."

"But Jane is very trusty when one really confides in her. I think she would be proud of having a secret to keep."

So presently Dora went to summon Mr. Chorley, who succeeded in deepening the good impression the young girl had begun. He was very manly and straightforward, and when he repeated his father's dying charge, Mrs. Bertrand began almost to believe in the possibility of a will being found.

They were still talking earnestly when a shadow passed the window. Dora sprang into the hall, closing the door behind her, and found an old friend, but most unwelcome guest, entering the wide doorway. She stood quite still, her face paling visibly.

"My darling Dora, I have frightened you almost to death, have I not?" said the gay, pleasant voice of Olive Harton.

"I was not expecting you—when did you return?"

"At noon, and I couldn't wait, I wanted to see you so. We returned sooner than we intended, and Clara's lover came with us. She is to be married immediately. And your mother—is she quite well?"

"Improving all the time. Excuse me a moment, Olive, dear, while I go and prepare her for a visitor. Come in the parlour."

"No, I'll sit here," and Olive took one of the chairs in the hall.

There was no mode of egress from Mrs. Bertrand's room save into the hall, consequently Mr. Chorley was a prisoner. After a moment's consideration, Mrs. Bertrand came forth with her daughter, and all three entered the parlour opposite.

"I don't believe you are a bit glad to see me," Olive said, with an embarrassed laugh. "You did not use to make such company of me."

Both Dora and her mother tried to place their guest at ease as rapidly as possible, and Mrs. Bertrand judged this would be more readily done by leading her to talk of her journey. In a few moments Olive launched into a lively description of all she had seen, and expressed her delight in the approaching wedding; "only," she ended with, "I don't like Clara's lover, and I am afraid I never shall."

Mrs. Bertrand gave her some gentle, motherly advice, but Olive soon changed the subject by inquiring what Dora had busied herself about the last three weeks.

After this there came a little awkward lull, and Olive rose to go.

"Oh," she said, pausing in the hall, "have you seen the tower ghost yet, Dora? Come, let us take a turn in the old rookery."

Dora would fain have declined, but Olive pushed on in gay unconcern. It was well her eyes or suspicions were not very acute, or she would have discovered some traces of Mr. Chorley's recent search. Dora fairly trembled, and was thankful when they reached the hall.

"I may as well take the key home, I suppose," Olive exclaimed. "Papa might happen to ask about it."

"Oh, not now," said the frightened Dora. "I want it a few days longer."

"Very well. But how oddly you act, Dora; and first you are pale, then crimson—what is the matter?"

"Nothing." And Dora laughed to hide her agitation, walking with her companion to the end of the garden, and promising to come over early the next morning.

"It is too bad," Dora said, vehemently, when she returned, "that the Hartons should have come back just now."

"I must be expeditious in my search," returned Mr. Chorley. "If you will not be frightened, I think I should like to work a little to-night."

Both ladies consented. When Jane returned, she was informed Mr. Allingham Chorley had come to search the tower, and desired the strictest silence on the matter. He accepted Dora's invitation to come down to tea, and Jane declared in confidence to her young mistress, as she was washing up the tea-things, "That she almost hoped Mr. Chorley would find the will, he was such a nice-looking, pleasant young gentleman."

The next morning Dora spent with her friend Olive, and all the afternoon she kept the tower-door fastened, lest some unlucky mischance should betray Mr. Chorley. He worked assiduously, searching for private drawers, false bottoms to the old chests, and took down the paneling in the study. But as he had to replace everything, his progress was not as rapid as he could wish.

On the third day, Dora was alarmed by seeing Mr. Harton walk rapidly up the path with a flushed and angry face. She was glad her mother had gone to ride with the doctor, and confronted Mr. Harton with

all the bravery she could summon. He rudely demanded the key of the tower, and told Dora she had no right to enter it, that it was his property, and he had let her mother no privilege whatever. She took the key from the nail, and handed it to him, much relieved when she saw him turn away.

As if reconsidering, he wheeled suddenly round and marched straight to the tower-door. Dora sprang forward, her heart beating in great bounds, and said, with sudden vehemence:

"Let me go, too; please do."

"Get away!" and he pushed her roughly aside.

She sank down on the floor in strange, breathless pain, and listened with intense eagerness for some sound. At last she heard it—too surely. Mr. Chorley had been discovered. Half-an-hour elapsed before Mr. Harton came down, and then he strode through the hall and garden like a madman.

Dora ran out of doors eagerly, and gave a glance to the window by which Mr. Chorley had entered. Moment after moment she watched, hoping to see him escape, but all was silent as the grave. Wringing her hands, she said, over and over again:

"What can I do for him? How shall I save him?"

Jane was equally perturbed, and even Mrs. Bertrand, through she tried to be very impartial, could not repress her sympathy, and even began to plan some mode of assisting him. But she had hardly laid aside her bonnet, when Mr. Harton and his myrmidons reappeared.

Allingham Chorley had just time to slip a tiny note in Dora's hand, unperceived by Mr. Harton, as he passed through the hall, closely guarded. It contained these words:

"DEAR LITTLE FRIEND,—Do not be disturbed on my account. I have been rather unlucky, but it will come right in the end, I am convinced. I was in the observatory when Mr. Harton entered, so had no chance of escape. Please do not answer any questions, if you can avoid them. I shall send for a legal friend of mine immediately, and when he comes, I have a favour to ask of you.—Your grateful friend,

"A. C."

Before night Chorley Cliffs and the village were in a high state of excitement, and the wildest stories were circulated. Jane resolutely refused to admit any of her gossiping cronies, and busied herself about Mrs. Bertrand.

In a few days it was settled that the case was quite strong against Mr. Chorley. In order to relieve the Bertrands from suspicion, he had frankly stated to Mr. Harton how he gained admission. One of the men who had been in the boat, and rescued Mr. Harton from a watery grave, on the occasion of Mr. Chorley's first visit, suddenly remembered with great distinctness that he had seen the two men quarrelling, and that Mr. Chorley had pushed his antagonist off the cliff. He was ready to swear to this on the trial, which would soon be brought on. Mr. Harton visited Mrs. Bertrand, and obligingly offered to release her, if she wished to leave the house before her term expired. She would have done this at once but for Dora's persuasion. The young girl could not analyze the strange tie that bound her to the place, but she pleaded earnestly to remain until October, as their original plan had been.

The friend that Mr. Chorley had sent for was a long while making his appearance, as the summons followed him from place to place, being always a little too late. He arrived a few days before the trial, and calling on Miss Bertrand, brought her another note from Mr. Chorley. In this he said he had searched everywhere, except under the study floor, and he wished now to have this done under the supervision of his friend, Mr. Townley, who was to defend him on the trial. It was his desire Dora should be present through the search.

Mr. Harton gnashed his teeth in impotent rage when he found he could not prevent this. He had intended to demolish the tower at his earliest convenience, but his daughter's marriage and the approaching trial had demanded too much of his attention to allow him to engage in it immediately. But he was present when the workmen began to remove the floor, and never left them for an instant.

It seemed as if this would be as unsuccessful as all the rest. No casket or packet of any kind was found. Dora drew a long sigh of disappointment.

"I am afraid we must be convinced now," Mr. Townley said to her.

"I hope your client will be satisfied," was Mr. Harton's sneering retort. "We will adjourn now, if you please."

Dora followed reluctantly. Stepping from beam to beam, a nail caught her dress, and she stopped to unfasten it. She was in the centre of the room, where the oaken table and high-backed chair generally stood, and pausing, a curious place in the beam attracted her attention. Calling to Mr. Townley, he began to examine it.

"Hand me a chisel," he said to one of the workmen;

and slipping it in a little crevice which looked as if at some time a square had been cut out and replaced, a vigorous wrench brought up the piece.

There was a cavity containing a box that looked like dingy, rusted iron. Mr. Townley brought it up to light with an air of triumph, while Mr. Harton staggered back in ghastly whiteness.

"We will open it," Mr. Townley said. "There is a sufficient number of witnesses;" and failing to force the lock, drew off the hinges. Yes, there was the will. Dora could not repress a glad cry of joy.

Mr. Townley glanced it over, and then said to Mr. Harton:

"Can you tell me the date of your will?"

"Fifteenth of May, 18—. It was drawn up the last time Captain Chorley was at home."

"This will is dated five years before that, but there is a codicil attached which bears the date of May twenty-fourth."

Mr. Harton gave a despairing groan. Mr. Townley proceeded to read it. By the first will, the property was divided equally between the two boys; the codicil provided if Harold, who was then married, should die childless, his wife should retain only a life interest in the portion, and at her death, it should revert to Vincent. The same provision was made for Harold, if Vincent should die first and childless.

During this reading a new thought had occurred to Mr. Harton. He would make his antagonist prove this will was written by Captain Chorley before he left the cliffs, on his last voyage. It might be impossible to find the date of his going. So, although angry and disappointed, he declared he would contest the will to the last point.

Dora was too hopeful to be cast down by this. She reserved her expressions of delight for her mother and Jane, and longed impatiently for the time when she might congratulate Mr. Chorley. But his trial did not end so happily as she had thought for. The evidence against him was pretty strong, but fortunately for him, the jury failed to agree, and the result was a new trial, as Mr. Harton was obstinate and energetic.

Then the two lawyers went to work with avidity to hunt up the missing date. Mr. Townley was successful. Captain Chorley had remained at the Cliffs two days after making the addition to his will. Allingham Chorley's claim was established beyond a doubt.

How the document Mrs. Chorley discovered ever came into existence remained for ever a secret. Mr. Harton was found dead in his bed the next morning, the passion and excitement of the last few days having culminated in an attack of heart disease. He had forbidden Olive to visit at the Cliffs, but now Mrs. Bertrand and Dora went to comfort the poor child. Clara and her husband were suddenly recalled home, the latter excessively indignant at the turn affairs had taken, and utterly refusing to do anything for Olive. If it pained or humiliated Clara to know she had been married solely for her wealth, she made no sign to those about her.

With his master's eye no longer upon him, the witness against Allingham Chorley wavered and grew confused, and finally admitted that it might have been an accident.

The prisoner was honourably discharged, and warmly congratulated on his good fortune.

The first use he made of his freedom was to walk over to the Cliffs.

Dora stood at the gate. She had so much to say, yet her eyes drooped under the gaze that met hers, and a strange, sweet crimson suffused her cheeks. He took both white hands in his, and kissed the sweet, silent mouth, and then, instead of going in immediately, walked up and down with her under the trees.

Late that evening they finished the conversation. She did it in this way:

"I want to ask poor Olive to come and live with us. She has lost everything, you know."

"And we have gained everything—fortune, love, and friends. I believe I owe most of them to you, so you shall have your wish. We will try to make Olive happy."

They kept their word. To this day Olive insists that Dora discovered the ghost of the tower, and the sweet wife says, laughingly:

"A very substantial ghost."

CLOTHING OF THE SOLDIER.—The recruit, on enlisting, receives his "kit" free, where formerly he had to pay for it out of his bounty money. The quality of the clothing, and especially of the boots, of the British soldier has vastly improved. Instead of one pair of gloves in the year, he now has two pairs. Formerly he had only one pair of trousers in the year, now he has three pairs in two years. The alterations required in the soldier's clothing are now made at the expense of the public, previously he had to pay

for the alterations himself. The necessities, such as caps, brushes, gloves, mess-tins, straps, and other articles, which were bought of the regimental contractors, often at very exorbitant prices, are now supplied from the public stores, at a reduction of at least 25 per cent., with, at the same time, a great improvement in the quality of the articles. The British soldier has now a better and a warmer great-coat. The old stiff and heavy shako has been exchanged for a light and soft one; that instrument of torture, the old rigid high stock, has been abolished, and replaced by one made to fit the neck; and, when serving in tropical climates, he is supplied with a useful serge frock in lieu of the tight-fitting tunic. Many other changes of a similar nature may be mentioned. These, however, are sufficient to indicate the increased attention which has been given of late years to the material comforts and the preservation of the health of our troops.

SELF-MADE;

OR,

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

By MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "The Lost Heiress," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A NIGHT OF HORROR.

He threw his sting into a poisonous libel
And on the honour of—oh, Gail!—his wife,
The nearest, dearest part of all men's honour,
Left a base slur to pass from mouth to mouth,
Of loose mechanics with all foal comments,
Of villanous jests and blasphemous obscenity,
While sneering nobles in more polished guise
Whispered the tale and smiled upon the lie.

DYRON.

CLAUDIA passed a weary day. She did not cease in her efforts to discover some clue to the disappearance of old Katy. But all her efforts were fruitless of success.

Early in the afternoon, the carriage that was sent for Mrs. MacDonald returned bringing that lady.

Claudia did not go down into the drawing-room to receive her; she considered Mrs. Dugald's companion, whatever her pretensions might be, no proper associate for Lady Vincent. She met the visitor, however, at dinner, which was served some hours earlier than usual in order to give the play-going party time enough to reach their destination before the rising of the curtain. She found Mrs. MacDonald to be a thin, pale, shabby woman about forty years of age; one of those poor, harmless, complacent creatures who, when they can do so without breaking any law of God, or man, are willing to compromise a good deal of their self-respect to secure privileges which they could not otherwise enjoy.

And though Mrs. MacDonald was a descendant of the renowned "Lord of the Isles," and was as proud of her lineage as any aristocrat alive, yet she did not hesitate to accept an invitation to go to the theatre with Lord Vincent, who was called a "fast" man, and Mrs. Dugald, who was more than a suspected woman.

Claudia treated this lady with the cold politeness that the latter could neither enjoy nor complain of. Immediately after dinner the party left for Banff.

Few good women have ever been so distressingly misplaced as Claudia was; therefore, few could understand the hourly torture she suffered from the mere presence of her vicious companions, or the infinite sense of relief she felt in being rid of them, if only for one evening. She felt the atmosphere the purer for their absence, and breathed more freely than she had done for many days.

She soon left the drawing-room, whose atmosphere was infected and disturbed with memories of Mrs. Dugald, and retired to her own boudoir, where all was comparatively pure and peaceful.

A deep bay-window from this room overhung the sea. There was a softly-cushioned semicircular sofa around this window, and a round mosaic table within it.

Claudia drew aside the golden-brown curtains, and sat down to watch the grey expanse of ocean, over which the night was now closing.

While gazing abstractedly out at sea she was thinking of Katy. Now that the darkening influence of Mr. Dugald's and Lord Vincent's presence was withdrawn from her sphere, she was enabled to think clearly and decide firmly. Now that the viscount no longer stood before her, exercising his diabolical powers of duplicity upon her judgment, she no longer believed his protestations of ignorance in regard to Katy's fate. On the contrary, she felt convinced that he knew all about it. She did not now suppose, what her first frenzied terrors had suggested, that Katy had been murdered; but that she had been abducted, or confined, to prevent her from divulging some secret to the prejudice of the viscount of which she had

become possessed. For Claudia had read the viscount's character aright, and she knew that though he would not hesitate to break every commandment in the catalogue when he could do so with impunity, yet he would not commit any crime that could jeopardise his own life or liberty. Therefore she knew he had not murdered Katy; but she believed that he had "sequestrated" her in some way.

Having come to this conclusion, Claudia next considered what her own duty was in the premises. Clearly it was for her to take every measure for the deliverance of her faithful servant; no matter how difficult or repugnant those measures should be.

Therefore she resolved that early the next morning she would order the carriage and go on her responsibility and lodge information with the police of the mysterious disappearance of her servant and the suspicious circumstance that attended her evanishment. Claudia knew that the eye of the police was still upon the castle, because it was believed to hold the undetected murderer of Miss Dunbar, and that, therefore, their action upon the present event would be prompt and keen. She knew, also, that the investigation would bring much exposure and scandal upon the castle and its inmates; and that it would enrage Lord Vincent and result in the final separation of herself and the viscount. But why, she asked herself, should she hesitate upon that account?

The price for which she had sold herself had not been paid. She had her empty title and no position. She was not a peeress among peeresses; not a queen of beauty and fashion, leading the *élite* of society in London. Ah, no! she was a despised and neglected wife, wasting the flower of her youth in a remote and dreary coast castle, and daily insulted and degraded by the presence of an unprincipled rival.

Claudia was by this time so worn out in body and spirit, so thoroughly wearied and sickened of her life at the castle, that she only desired to get away with her servants and pass the remainder of her days in peaceful obscurity.

And her contemplated act of complaining to the authorities was to be her first step towards that end.

Having resolved upon this measure, Claudia felt more at ease.

She drew the curtains of her window, and seated herself in her favourite easy chair before the bright, sea-coal fire, and rang for tea.

Sally brought the waiter up to her mistress and remained in attendance upon her.

"Has anything been heard of Katy yet?" inquired Lady Vincent.

"No, ma'am, nothing at all," answered Sally through her soles.

"Don't cry; tell them, when you go down, to keep up the search through the neighbourhood; and if she is not forthcoming before to-morrow morning, I will take such steps as shall ensure her discovery," said Lady Vincent, as she sipped her tea.

Sally only wept in reply.

"Remove this service now. And you need not come up again this evening unless you have news to bring me of Katy, for I need to be alone," said Lady Vincent, as she set her empty cup upon the waiter.

She took the service from the room.

And the viscountess wheeled her chair around to the fire, placed her feet upon the fender, and yielded her wearied and distracted spirit up to the healing and soothing influences of night and solitude. As she sat there, the words of a beautiful hymn glided into her memory. Often before this evening, lying alone and wakeful on her bed—feeling the great blessing night brought her, in isolating her entirely from her evil companions, and drawing her into a purer sphere—feeling all the sweet and holy influences of night around her—she had soothed her spirit to rest repeating the words of this hymn:

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drinks repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

Oh, Holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What souls have borne before,
Thou layst thy fingers on the lips of care
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer,
Bescent with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice prayed-for, the most fair,
The best beloved Night!

She repeated it now. And it soothed her like a benediction.

A solitary night in her own boudoir would not seem to promise much enjoyment; yet Claudia was happier, because more peaceful, now than she had ever been since her first arrival at Castle Craig.

She sat on, letting the hours pass calmly and silently over her, until the clock struck ten. Then, to her surprise, she heard a knocking at the outer hall door, followed by the sound of an arrival, and of many footsteps hastening up the stairs.

Claudia arose to her feet, in astonishment, and at

the same moment heard the voice of the viscount without, saying in ruffianly tones:

"Burst open the door, then! Don't you see it is locked on the inside?"

And with a violent kick the door of Claudia's boudoir, which certainly was not locked, was thrown open, and Lord Vincent, with inflamed cheeks and blood-shot eyes, strode into the room, followed by Mrs. Dugald, Mrs. MacDonald, and old Cuthbert.

"Keep the door, sir! Let no one pass out!" roared the viscount to his butler, who immediately shut the door and placed himself against it.

"My lord!" exclaimed Claudia, in indignant amazement, "what is the meaning of this violence?"

"It means, my lady, that you are discovered, run to earth, entrapped, cunning vixen as you are!" exclaimed the viscount, with an air of vindictive triumph.

Mrs. Dugald laughed scornfully.

Mrs. MacDonald turned up her chin contemptuously.

Old Cuthbert groaned aloud.

Claudia looked from one to the other, and then said:

"My lord, you and your friends appear to have been supping on very bad wine; I would counsel you to retire and sleep off its effects."

"Ha, ha! my lady! You take things coolly! I compliment you on your self-possession!" sneered the viscount.

Her heart nearly bursting with anger, Claudia threw herself into her chair, and with difficulty controlling her emotions, said:

"Will your lordship do me the favour to explain your errand in this room and then retire with your party as speedily as possible?"

"Certainly, my lady, that is but reasonable, and is also just what I intended to do," said the viscount, bowing with mock courtesy.

And he drew a letter from his pocket and held it in his hand, while he continued to speak, addressing himself now to the whole party assembled in Lady Vincent's boudoir.

"It is necessary to premise, friends, that my marriage with this lady was a hasty, ill-advised and inconsiderate one; unacceptable to my family, unfortunate for myself; humiliating in its results. For some weeks past my suspicions were aroused to the fact that all was not right between the viscountess and another member of my establishment. Cuthbert, keep that door! Let no one rush past!"

"Ah, me laird; dinna fash yourself! I'll keep it!" groaned the old man, putting his back firmly against the door.

"Lord Vincent!" exclaimed Claudia, haughtily, "I demand that you retract your words! You know them to be as false—as false as—yourself! They could not be truer than that!"

"I will prove every word I have spoken to be true!" replied the viscount. Then continuing his story, he said: "This morning certain circumstances strengthened my suspicions. Among others, the persistency with which her ladyship, though in good health, and with no other engagement at hand, resolved and adhered to her resolution to remain at home, and miss the rare opportunity of seeing Mr. and Mrs. Dean in their great parts of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Suspecting that her ladyship had some unlawful design in thus denying herself an amusement of which I knew her to be excessively fond, and preferring to spend the evening at home, of which I know she is excessively tired, I ordered my faithful old servant Cuthbert to watch, not his mistress, Lady Vincent, but another individual——"

Here old Cuthbert interrupted the speaker with deep groans.

Claudia remained sitting in her chair, with her face as pale as death, her teeth firmly set, and her eyes fiercely fixed on the face of the man who was thus maligning her honour.

He continued:

"How well my suspicions were founded, and how faithfully old Cuthbert performed his duty, you will soon see. It appears that we had but just started on our drive, when Cuthbert, watching the motions of the suspected person, saw him steal towards Lady Vincent's apartments. The old man glided after him, and, unseen himself, saw him, the miscreant, enter Lady Vincent's boudoir!"

"It is as false as Satan! Oh, you infamous wretch! what form of punishment would be ignominious enough for you!" cried Claudia, springing to her feet, her two eyes flaming with consuming wrath.

But the viscount approached and laid his hand upon her shoulder, and forced her down into her seat again.

And Claudia, too proud to resist, where resistance would be but a vain, unseemly struggle, dropped into her chair and sat perfectly still—a marble statue, with eyes of flame.

The viscount, with fiendish coolness, continued:

"Cuthbert watched and listened on the outside of the door for some time, and then, thinking that the intruder had no intention of leaving the room, he went and wrote a note, and sent it by one of the grooms, mounted on a swift horse, to me. Ladies, you all saw the boy enter the theatre and hand me the note! Your interest was aroused, but I only told you that I was summoned in haste to my lady's apartments, and begged you to come with me——"

"And I thought her ladyship was perhaps ill, and needed experienced help, or I should certainly not have followed your lordship into this room," said Mrs. MacDonald, who, however, made no motion to withdraw.

Mrs. Dugald's insulting laugh rang through the room.

"I beg pardon, madam; I know this is not a pleasant scene for a lady to take part in; but I needed witnesses, and necessity has no law. If you permit me, I will read the note I received," said the viscount, with a diabolical sneer, as he unfolded the paper. He read as follows:

"It is as your ladyship suspected. If your ladyship will come your way home at once, you will like find the sinfu' pair in me ledly's boudoir."

The note had neither name nor date.

"You know," pursued Lord Vincent, "that we hurried home; you saw me speak aside with Cuthbert in the hall; in that short interview he informed me that he had remained upon the watch, and that the villain had not yet left Lady Vincent's apartments; that he was still within them!"

"Oh, Cuthbert! I believed you to be an honest old man! It is awful to find you in league with these wretches!" exclaimed Claudia, in sorrowful indignation.

"Oh, me ledly! I'd rather these auld limbs o' mine had been streaked in death, ere I had to use them in siccan uncanny work! But the Lord's will be done!" groaned the old man, in such sincere grief, that Claudia was thoroughly perplexed.

And all this time the viscount was continuing his cool, demoniacal monologue.

"It was for this reason, ladies, that I burst open the door and called you in; and it was to prevent the escape of the fellow that I placed Cuthbert on guard at the door. Now, my lady, that you understand the cause of the 'violence' of which you just now complained, you will please to permit me to search the room. You cannot complain that I have acted with unseemly haste. I have proceeded with great deliberation. In fact, your accomplice has had abundant time to escape, if he had the means."

"Lord Vincent, these outrages shall cost you your life!" exclaimed Claudia, in the low, deep, stern key of concentrated passion.

"All in good time, my lady," sneered the viscount, commencing the humiliating search. He looked in the recess of the bay-window, peeped behind curtains, opened closets, and finally drew a large easy-chair from the corner of the room.

"Pray, whom do you expect to find concealed in my apartment, my lord?" demanded Claudia, white with rage.

"My respectable valet, the good Mr. Frisbie. And here he is!" replied the viscount, sarcastically.

And to Claudia's horror and amazement, he drew the trembling wretch from his concealment and hurled him into the centre of the room, where he stood with dangling arms and bending legs, pale and quaking; but whether with real or assumed fear Claudia could not tell.

"How came this fellow in my room?" she demanded, in consternation.

"Aye! sure enough, how did he come here?" sneered Lord Vincent.

Mrs. Dugald laughed.

Mrs. MacDonald raised both her hands in horror.

"Come! perhaps he will tell us why he came here! Confess, you scoundrel! Say what brought you here!" exclaimed the viscount, suddenly changing his tone from cool irony to burning rage as he seized and shook his valet.

"Oh, my lord! I will, I will! only let go my collar!" gasped the man, shaking or affecting to shake.

"Confess, then, you rascal! What brought you here?"

"Oh, my lord! mercy, mercy! I will confess—I will!"

"Do it, then, you villain!"

"Oh, my lord, I—I come at—at my lady's invitation, my lord!"

"You came at Lady Vincent's invitation?" cried the viscount, shaking the speaker.

"Y-y-yes, my lord!" stammered the valet.

"You—came—at my invitation?" demanded Lady Vincent, haughtily, fixing her eyes of fire on the creature's face.

"Yes, my lady, you know I did! It is no use for us to deny it now! Ah, my lady, I always warned you

that we should be found out, and now, sure enough we are!" replied Frisbie.

Claudia clasped her hands and raised her eyes to Heaven with the look of one who would have called down fire upon the heads of these fiends in human form.

Lord Vincent continued to question his valet.

"Does Lady Vincent make a practice of inviting you to her apartments?"

"Y-y-yes, my lord?"

"How often?"

"Wh-wh-whenver your lordship's absence makes it safe!"

"Then I am to understand that you are a favoured suitor of Lady Vincent's?"

"Yes, yes, my lord! Oh, my lord, I know I have done very wrong! I know I——"

"Do you know that you deserve death, sir?" demanded the viscount, in a voice of thunder.

"Oh, my lord, mercy—mercy! I know I am a great sinner! I could kill myself for it, if it wasn't for fear of losing my soul! All I can do now is to repent and confess. I do repent from the bottom of my heart, and I will confess everything. Yes, I will confess everything. Yes, I will tell your lordship all about it, and throw myself on your lordship's mercy!" replied this remorseless villain.

"Enough! I wish to hear no more from you just at present. Your confession would be scarcely fit for the ears of these ladies. Your testimony must be reserved for a future occasion," said the viscount. And then, turning to Claudia with the coolest and most insulting hauteur, he said:

"And, now, what have you to say to all this, my lady?"

Claudia advanced into the centre of the room; her step was firm, her head erect, her cheeks burning, her eyes blazing, her whole form dilated and lifted to grandeur; she looked a very Nemesis—a very goddess of retributive justice, as, throwing her consuming glance around upon the group, who fairly quailed before her, she said:

"What have 'I to say to all this?'—I say, Lord Vincent, be assured that you shall die for these insults! I say that I know this to be a foul conspiracy against my honour; and as feeble as it is foul. Oh, reptiles—base, crawling, slimy, venomous reptiles! Do you really suppose that the honour of a pure woman is of such weak and sickly nature as to be destroyed by the poison of your calumnies? Fools!—I shall leave this place to-morrow. I shall go to Edinburgh, and see an old friend of my father's. I will tell him all that has taken place and come to my knowledge since I have lived under this polluted and accursed roof! I will advise with him as to the best measures to be taken for the discovery of my poor old servant, Katy, and for the unmasking and prosecuting to conviction the wretches who have conspired against my honour. What! I am the daughter of Randolph Merlin, who never spared a foe. Take heed, beware, and escape while you may! My lord, your fate shall find you, even though it follow you to the farthest ends of the earth! You are warned! And, as a few moments since my request that you would withdraw your accomplices from the room was disregarded, I must retire to my chamber."

And with the air and manner of an outraged queen, Claudia left the boudoir.

"Friends," said Lord Vincent, turning to his female companions, "your testimony hereafter will be required in this case. I beg you, therefore, in the name of justice, to make a mental note of what you have seen and heard to-night. Remember Lady Vincent's strange conduct in declining to accompany us to the theatre, and resolving to stay at home; remember the note that was brought me in my box and our unexpected return home; remember particularly that the door leading into Lady Vincent's apartments was fastened on the inside, and that I had to break it open; remember also that we found the wretch, Frisbie, concealed in the room, and that he made a full confession."

"It is not likely that we shall forget it, my lord," said Mrs. MacDonald, gravely.

"No; what horror!" cried Mrs. Dugald.

"And now, ladies, I will no longer detain you from your necessary rest," said the viscount, ringing the bell, which the housekeeper, looking amazed, scandalized, and full of curiosity, answered.

"Murdoch, show this lady, Mrs. MacDonald, to the blue suit of rooms, and place yourself at her service. Madam, pray order any refreshments you may require. Good-night, madam. Sister, good night!"

"Good-night, good-night, my lord. I shall pray that you may be able to bear this great misfortune with the fortitude becoming a man!" said Mrs. MacDonald.

When the 'ladies,' attended by the housekeeper, had left the room, and were quite out of hearing, Lord Vincent turned to his accomplice and whispered:

"You did that capitally, Friebie. You would make an excellent actor! Any one on earth looking at you this evening, and not knowing the truth, would have thought you were dying of mortification and terror. You shook and faltered so naturally!"

"Oh, my lord!" returned the valet, in modest deprecation of this praise.

"You did; but now I wish you to tell me! How did you manage to awaken the suspicions of old Cuthbert? How did you manage to draw his eyes upon you? And draw him on to watch you until you entered the room without seeming to know that you were watched?"

"I tell you, my lord, that part of my task was hard! But I contrived to do it by pretending to watch him, and affecting to dodge out of sight every time he saw me. This excited his curiosity, and caused him to conceal himself in order to watch me. When I knew that he had done this, I began to creep towards my lady's apartments, knowing full well that he was stealing after me."

"But how did you contrive to get into the boudoir?"

"I wore list slippers, and your lordship knows that the thick carpets return no echo to the footsteps, and that the doors open and shut silently. First I peeped through the keyhole, and I saw that her ladyship was sitting within the curtained recess of the bay-window, looking out at sea, her attention being absorbed there, and her back being towards the door. So I just softly opened the door, entered the room, closing it after me, and concealed myself behind your lordship's own great easy-chair, that I knew was never drawn from its dark corner."

"For the good reason that the owner is never there to occupy it!" sneered the viscount.

"Just so, my lord! And now I have told your lordship exactly how I managed matters, so as to make old Cuthbert our accomplice without his ever suspecting it."

"Old Cuthbert must think you a grand rascal!"

"He does me great honour, your lordship!"

"There, now go about your business, Friebie! Of course you must get away from here by the morning's first light! It must be supposed that you have been kicked out. Remain in the neighbourhood of Banff. You will be wanted as a witness, you know."

"Yes, my lord; but, in the meantime—I have saved nothing. I have no means."

"Oh, you mercenary rascal! You have saved your neck from the gallows, if you have saved nothing else! But here are ten pounds for present needs; and I will take care not to see you want for the future. Now be off with you. Your longer stay will excite surprise and conjecture."

"Your lordship is too good!" said the catfish, bowing himself out.

Lord Vincent soon after left the boudoir and went down-stairs. In the hall he found old Cuthbert up and waiting.

"You here yet, Cuthbert?" "Why don't you go to bed?"

"Oh, me laird, I couldna sleep wi' the thought o' siccan dishonour befalling the house!" groaned the old man.

"The dishonour attaches but to one person, and the house will be rid of her when she is cast forth," said the viscount.

"Oh, me laird, fer pity dinna do that! Send her her ways back to her ain country. She's but a wee bit laisie after a'! And she's awa' from feyther and mither, and a' her folk! And, 'deed, I canna bring myself to think that ill o' her, neither! 'deed, no!"

"Cuthbert, you are out of your senses. What are you talking about? The man was found concealed in her room, and, being discovered, confessed his guilt," said Lord Vincent.

"Ay, rae laird, but she denied all knowledge of him; and she looked grand wi' the majesty of truth, me laird. Folk dinna look that way when they're leeing. And the lad Friebie looked just as if he were leeing. Folk dinna look as he looked when they're telling the truth!"

"Cuthbert, you are an old dolt! We do not depend on Friebie's word exclusively; we have the fact of finding him in the room!"

"I misdoubt he can jest hid himself in there, for the purpose of robbery, unbeknownst to the lady! And then cast the blame on her to help to shield himself, the villain!"

"Cuthbert, you are in your dotage!" exclaimed the viscount, angrily.

"It may be sae, my laird, but I canna think shame o' the lady! Nay, I canna! Howbeit, richt or wrang, the shame has come till her! Sae, me laird, in mercy take an auld man's counsel, and e'en just gie her her dower, and send her her ways to her feyther's house!"

"Cuthbert, your brain is softening. Hark ye! get yourself off to bed."

"Ay, me laird," said the old man meekly, as he

withdrew to his own den, "but I canna think sh' of the laddy—nay, nay, I canna!"

When all the house was still, Lord Vincent stole to the apartments of Mrs. Dugald.

"Oh, I have been waiting for you so long and so impatiently," she said, as she placed him a chair at her dressing-room fireside.

"I came as soon as all was quiet. Oh, Faustina! how I am sinking my soul in sin and infamy for your sake!" exclaimed Lord Vincent, as a momentary quail of shame sickened his heart.

"Do you repent it, then?" she inquired, with a glance that brought him to her feet, a slave once more—"do you repent it!"

"No, my angel, no; though we go to perdition, we go together—together! and it is joy and glory to lose myself for you—for you!" he exclaimed, passionately, and attempting to embrace her.

"Ha, stop, beware! You are not free yet, nor am I your wife!" exclaimed the artful woman, withdrawing herself from his advances.

"But I shall be free soon and you shall be my wife. You know it, Faustina. You know that I am your slave. You can do with me as you please. Then why be so cruel as to refuse me even one kiss?"

"That I may have nothing to reproach myself with in after time, when I shall be Lady Vincent. That you may not have to blush for your second viciousness as you have had to blush for your first!"

"Oh, Faustina, how coldly cruel and calculating you sometimes seem to me! Why do I love you so insanely that you possess my very soul? Why is it, beautiful witch?"

"Because I love you so much, *mon ami*."

"You do—you do! You really love me, 'Tina?"

"Oh, I do, you know I do, more than life!"

"Then let Satan have me after death! I do not care!" replied this desperate fool.

"Hush! this is a dangerous topic. It makes me reel. Give me a glass of water, Malcolm, and let us talk of something else," said the wily siren.

When she had drunk the water the viscount brought her, she said:

"There is a question I have been dying to ask you all day, but I could get no good chance to ask without the risk of being overheard; and that would have been ruin."

"What was that question, Faustina?"

The woman turned so deadly white that her black eyes gleamed like great balls of jet from a face of stone, as, sinking her voice to the lowest key, she said:

"What have you done with it?"

"With what, Faustina?"

"With the dead body of the black woman?"

The viscount slowly lowered his finger, and significantly pointed downward.

"Down there?" whispered Faustina.

The viscount nodded.

"Where we left it?"

"Yes."

"Oh, but that is not safe. There is suspicion! Suppose there should be a search—suppose there should be a discovery?" cried the woman, in alarm.

For she who was not afraid of committing the worst crimes, was terribly afraid of meeting their consequences.

"Be at ease. I shall not leave her there long; the sea is near at hand," whispered the viscount.

"Yes, you may cast her into the sea, but the sea sometimes cast back its dead—especially when they have been murdered!" shuddered the woman.

"The sea will not cast her back," said the viscount, significantly.

"Oh, you will tie a heavy weight to her body; but when will you do it? Oh! I am in agony until that is removed."

"Be still. I hope to have an opportunity of removing it to-night."

"But you cannot do it alone—let me help you. I would rather help you!"

"No, I can and will do it without your help. Do you think, my angel, that I would permit you to engage in such dreadful work?"

"I helped you to stop her breath," said the woman, hoarsely.

"That was a work of necessity that presented itself suddenly before us. This is different."

"But I would rather help—I would rather be present! I would rather see; for then I should know to a certainty that it was gone!" she insisted.

"Can you not trust me?"

"No, no, I cannot trust any one when my head is in danger of the guillotine!"

"I tell you there are no guillotines in England."

"The other thing, then, which is worse, because it is more disgraceful—hanging by the neck until one is dead! Ugh! No, I cannot trust you, Malcolm, where so much is at stake!" said the woman, with a terrible shudder.

"You have no confidence in me, then? And yet you say you love me. Why, confidence is the very soul of love!"

"Oh, yes, I love you, Malcolm! I love you more than words can tell! And it is for your safety as well as for my own that I am so cautious. And I have confidence in you, Malcolm; only, being alone, you may not be able to do the work effectually. I must help you. The house is still, everybody has retired—can we not go now and remove it?"

"No—not now. There is a vessel lying at anchor close under the shore. We must wait until she moves off."

"And the vessel may lay there a whole week. And, in the meantime, what becomes of the body?" exclaimed Faustina, her eyes wild with apprehension.

"I am assured, by those that know, that the vessel will sail with the first tide to-morrow morning. So, be tranquil. And now, Faustina, there is another subject which we must settle to-night. Lady Vincent leaves the castle early to-morrow morning. That is necessary; and though it cleaves my heart in two to part with you, I must do it for a season. The world must have no cause to talk of you and me, Faustina; of you, especially, for of you it would be the most likely to talk."

"Why of me?" inquired the ex-opera singer, testily.

"Because, my dearest, you have more beauty, and genius, and fame than the world ever forgives in a woman," answered the viscount, artfully.

"Oh!" said the siren, with an air of arch incredulity.

"And now, Faustina, it shall be for you to decide. Shall you remain here, with Mrs. MacDonald for a companion and chaperone, while I go to London to take the preliminary steps towards the divorce; or shall you go to Brighton or Torquay, or any other watering-place on the south coast?"

Mrs. Dugald was very astute. She answered promptly:

"Oh, I will remain here, and then you will not be jealous. There is no one here to admire me, except Mrs. MacDonald, and Old Cuthbert, and Murdoch."

"Bless you—bless you! I do believe you love me, because you anticipate my wishes so readily," said this devotee, fervently.

"And now you must go, and say good-night. It is two o'clock in the morning, and I am tired to death. And mind about that below, you know! And the first safe opportunity you have, come to me to help you to remove it. Mind!" said Faustina, raising her finger.

"I will mind. Good-night! What! no kiss, even for good-night?" he said, as she recoiled from his offered salute.

"No, I reserve my kisses for my husband!" she answered, archly.

Thus this evil woman, steeped to the lips in sin, affected the prude with the man she wished to secure. And, while making and receiving the most ardent protestations of love, disallowed the very slightest caress.

The viscount, baffled and dissatisfied, but more determined than ever to marry this tantalizing beauty, left the room and retired to his own chamber.

Mr. Friebie's work was over there, and Mr. Friebie himself was absent, of course.

(To be continued.)

THE POTOMAC.—The Potomac is completely ice-bound—the first time in seven years. A large number of vessels are frozen in between Alexandria and Aquia Creek, and a large fleet is detained at anchor further below. The ice in some places is several inches thick, a little thinner where the current is fast, and very thick where the water is quiet, and strong enough to bear a man's weight. Of course the blockade runners improve this opportunity to take contraband goods from the Maryland to the Virginia shore, and without fear of molestation or detection. Provisions and supplies for the Potomac flotilla have to be sent *via* Baltimore, as communication between the Navy-yard and the flotilla by river is impossible.

FATAL DUEL.—Letters from Munich mention the painful sensation caused there by a fatal duel between Counts Sternbach and Hohnstein, which recently took place near Freising, in Bavaria. Sternbach, it is said, was jealous of his young wife, and suspected her of being too partial to his half-brother, Hohnstein, a natural son of the old ex-King of Bavaria, now in Rome. Hohnstein took offence at the other's suspicions, and, instead of expostulating with him and convincing him that they were unfounded, challenged him. The affair was referred, according to one account, to a so-called "Court of Honour," which, notwithstanding the consanguinity of the adversaries, decided that the duel must take place. They fought at ten paces. The alleged adulterer had the first shot,

and sent his bullet straight to the heart of his half-brother. The victim, who was Lieutenant-Colonel of Cuirassiers, and who had the reputation of an excellent officer, leaves one child a year old. The Munich clergy refused to attend the burial of the slain man, and a comrade from the regiment officiated at the grave.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jewell," "The Prolate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER LX.

"PERHAPS," said Sir Frederick, turning to the rector, "this gentleman can afford us some clue to what afterwards occurred?"

Dr. Harland was accordingly sworn.

"I returned to England," said the rector, "when a mere boy, accompanied by my mother, who believed that she had been betrayed and deserted by a heartless libertine: and the said conviction hastened her death—for, shortly after her arrival, I had the misery to lose her. By the kindness of her friends, I was sent to Cambridge, became a Fellow, and ultimately tutor to my college—which appointment I resigned on being presented to the living I now hold. Accident, many years since, revealed to me that Sir Charles Briancourt and the Mr. Devereux whom I regarded as the betrayer of my mother, were the same person. I wrote to him, reproaching him with what I conceived to be his villany. A few days afterwards I read in the papers an account of his death, and I buried my resentment with him."

"Vastly romantic," exclaimed Sir Phineas, with a sneer, although every word the speaker uttered carried conviction to most of his auditors.

"Quite a romance," added Quirk; "we shall hear what a court of justice will say to it!"

"Have you any knowledge," inquired General Rebew, "of the circumstances which preceded or followed the death of Sir Charles Briancourt?"

"None."

"I thought not!" observed the lawyer, in a triumphant tone; "too prudent to mix himself up in that affair! Pity he has not exercised a similar discretion in the present matter!"

"My dear Mr. Quirk," said Sir Frederick Silvertop, "do not be so impatient. Take my word for it that, before I have done with you, you shall be perfectly satisfied upon every point which interests your client! Although Dr. Harland cannot satisfy your very laudible curiosity, Mr. Barnes most probably can! Am I right?" he added, addressing the witness.

"Perfectly, Sir Frederick!" answered the steward; "the letter to which the gentleman alludes fell into the hands of my lady, whose astonishment at finding herself the nominal wife of my master, could only be equalled by her indignation at the deceit which she said, had been practised upon her, and—"

Here the old man paused: there was evidently something which he felt reluctant to proceed with.

"Speak, Barnes!" said his mistress; "this is neither the place nor moment for a false delicacy!"

"Of course," observed Sir Frederick, addressing the bench, "as men of honour and family, you can feel for the cruel position in which my client was placed!"

A deep murmur of sympathy from the bench—many of whose occupants remembered the once-lovely Clara Broadlands—the belle of the county, the pride of the hunt—attested that they did feel for her.

"My lady," continued the witness, "was a proud woman—a very proud one!"

"Some truth in that!" spitefully muttered Quirk, by way of commentary upon his words.

"And bitterly resented the discovery! Despite my master's entreaties, she insisted upon separating from him instantly; she would listen to no explanation—no excuse for the seeming treachery of which she had been the victim! She threatened exposure—braved him; and they parted, never to meet again! That same night Sir Charles swallowed poison!"

"Did he keep it in the house on purpose?" inquired the lawyer, with a shrug of incredulity. "You should connect your story better, man!"

"That, too, I can explain!" answered Barnes, in a broken voice. "Shortly after my master's second marriage, I acted not only as house-steward but managed the home farm, and was in the habit of keeping arsenic by me, to steep the grain in, before sowing it. About five in the morning James Trotter, the under-bailiff, called upon me for some. I opened the drawer where I kept it—it was gone!"

As the old man made this statement, it was extraordinary to witness the effect which it produced upon Sarah Tubby. A heavy load seemed removed from her heart: she almost giggled with delight, despite the reproving looks of the magistrates. The feeling was hysterical—she could not repress it.

"Thank God, my lady!" she whispered; "thank

God! how could you let me suppose for so many years that— But, no matter—we can defy them now!"

The mortification which she would otherwise have felt at not having fully shared the confidence of her mistress, was lost in the delight of being able to dart looks of scorn and triumph at her old suitor, Quirk, and his crest-fallen grandson.

"I believe," said Sir Frederick, who was the only person present who seemed perfectly unmoved at the discovery which had taken place, "that James Trotter, the bailiff, is still living?"

"He is?" replied Barnes.

The man was called, and an aged rustic made his appearance. There was an air of honesty and frankness in his homely features which at once prepossessed all but those who were interested in discrediting him with a favourable opinion of his truth. When sworn, he kissed the book with simple fervour.

"Are you acquainted with Philip Barnes?" inquired Sir Frederick.

"Well, I reckon I be!"

"How many years have you known him?"

"About forty!" was the reply.

"How many does that mean?"

"Let him go on, Sir Frederick, if, you please," observed one of the magistrates, with a smile; "we perfectly understand him: he means more than forty years!"

The counsel bowed, and proceeded with his examination.

"Were you bailiff at the home-farm, to the late Sir Charles Briancourt, the grandfather of the present baronet?"

"Under-bailiff!" answered the old man, correcting him.

"Well, under-bailiff, then?"

"Ees, I wor," said the witness; "and a good master he wor; better nor most on an now! Poor folk could live then—wages wasn't so low, nor food so dear; but gentlefolk say it be all for the best, tho' I can't see how a dear loaf be for the poor man's good! You be a lawyer, I reckon, and maybe you can, sir!"

Several of the gentlemen smiled. Sir Frederick was a staunch Protectionist.

"Do you remember the death of Sir Charles?" continued the counsel.

"Which? there wor two! One as died in furrian parts?"

"I mean your first master, the husband of this lady!"

"Remember it—I should think I do!" exclaimed James Trotter, with a burst of grateful feeling; "where is the poor man who forgets it? He wor indeed a good man—every inch on un!"

"Did you see Philip Barnes on that day?"

"Ees; I went up to the manor for pison, I think, to steep the grain in, to keep the varmint from pecking it; for we wer goin' to sow the six acre croft."

"Now, then, my good man, mark well my question—I am sure you will answer it truly—did you obtain the poison?"

"No!"

"Did you observe anything particular in the manner of Philip Barnes?"

The old rustic smiled.

"Well, I reckon I did! Don't be angry!" he said, addressing the steward, "but I mun speak God's truth! When he opened drawer to gi' I the pison, he turned so comical and queer, loike, that I seed he wor ticcled; but he wor n't given to drink—I mun say that for un, Mister Lawyer—and that's what made I notice it!"

"Did he give it you?"

"No; but he run out of the room like a madman—queer in the stomach, I s'pose! I waited more nor two hours. When he com'd back, he wor pale and white, loike. He told I to go whoam—and so I did. Soon arter, I heard as how poor Sir Charles wor dead!"

The simple truthfulness with which the former bailiff gave his evidence—the purport of which he appeared entirely ignorant of—carried conviction with it.

"You can now, gentlemen, understand the letter which has misled the usually clear judgment of Mr. Quirk!" observed Sir Frederick Silvertop, with evident satisfaction; "but perhaps that clever person would like to question the witness?"

The lawyer avowed that he should much like to do so.

"Before coming here," he said, "did you have any conversation with Mr. Barnes?"

"Ees, Mister Quirk!"

"When?"

"Yesterday! He comed w't that gentleman to my cottage, and told I to be here. I know'd I had done nothin' wrong," added the old man, with honest pride, "and so I comed!"

"Did he tell you what you were required for?"

"No!"

"And did you only see him in the presence of that

gentleman?" continued the lawyer, in an insinuating tone. "Had you no private talk with him? Come—recollect yourself!"

"No!"

"And you mean to state that he said nothing more to you than that you were to be here this morning?"

"Not a word!" replied James Trotter. "Eh—ees—stay! God forgi' I—I nearly told a lie! He ax'd I how the rhumatiz got on!"

"You have an excellent memory!" observed the mortified Mr. Quirk, with a sneer, "to recollect everything which passed so many years ago."

The doubt of his veracity, thus indirectly thrown out, excited the anger of the witness, and he made answer, that he could remember things as minutely which took place years before the death of his old master.

"Perhaps you will favour the bench by stating some of them?"

This was the most imprudent speech which the lawyer perhaps ever made—for the retort was terrible.

"Well, then, Mister Lawyer," replied James Trotter, "I remember three name being in the *Hus and Cry*, 'bout the trust money for the parish six years afore that! I know thee paid it, when thee could not help it!" he added; "but it wor in, for all that!"

Quirk sat down, humbled and abashed—he had no more questions to ask. The answer to his last had silenced even his loquacity; with a tremulous hand he wiped the thick drops of perspiration from his burning brow, and tried to smile: but the effort was too transparent.

"Curse him!" he muttered between his teeth; "curse him!"

Such curses as he muttered arrived at the judgment-seat, to stand at the dread account as witnesses against him.

The examination of the steward was resumed.

"On discovering the absence of the pison," he continued, "I rushed to my master's room—he was still living—but the hand of death so visible, that any assistance would have been useless. He avowed to me that he had taken the contents of the packet, and bound me by a solemn promise never to reveal the manner of his death, unless to clear the innocent. I equally promised," he added, "not to disclose the secret of his previous marriage, unless called upon to do so by Lady Briancourt."

"Did Sir Charles confide any paper to your care?" inquired Sir Frederick.

"He did!" said the old man; "feeling the difficulty, not to say danger of my position, my poor master, at my entreaty, wrote, even in his final agonies, an avowal of his rash act—it is here!"

So saying, the faithful servant handed a paper to the magistrates, in which the baronet had traced, with a trembling hand, the following lines:

"Let no one be accused of my death, or inquire into my motives: the deed has been my own—no living being had cognisance of my intention! May God protect my unhappy wife and my dear children, and forgive me the wrong I have done them, in leaving them fatherless at their tender years!"

It was signed "Charles Briancourt."

Never was vindication more complete; there was no disputing the authenticity of the writing. Several persons—amongst others Sir Henry and General Rebew—instantly recognized it.

Lady Briancourt was overwhelmed with congratulations and sympathy. The charge against her was at once dismissed.

As far as regarded the claims of Dr. Harland to the title and estates of Sir Phineas, a superior court could alone decide upon their merits.

As Mr. Quirk was about to quit the magistrates' room, Sir Frederick Silvertop requested him to remain.

"Remain!" repeated the lawyer in a tone of despondency; "for what?"

"To explain, my dear sir, how that letter—which I am prepared to prove was stolen, together with other property, from the apartment of Mr. Barnes—came into your possession!"

"I found it!"

"Where?"

"Where?—the lie was not ready, and the guilty man was committed upon the evidence of Bandy-legged Jem, the postilion of the Briancourt Arms—who, our readers will remember, was a witness of Ned Cantor's being liberated from the manor-house by Quirk, on the night of the robbery—upon the double charge of aiding an escape from justice, and assisting in feloniously purloining the property of the house-steward."

The magistrates unanimously refused to take bail to any amount which his affectionate grandson tendered for his appearance. "Felony," as Sir Frederick Silvertop judiciously observed, "not being a bailable offence."

Accompanied by her defender, Lady Briancourt returned to Broadlands; but the effort it had cost her haughty spirit to submit to the exposure of what she

considered her shame so affected her, that for several days her life was despaired of.

"You once asked me, *Mister Quirk*," whispered Sarah Tubby, in the ear of her former admirer, "if I ever saw a man hanged? and I told you no! But I trust I soon shall! Good-day, *Mister Quirk*!"

With this charitable speech, the spinster followed her mistress to the carriage. A long-secret terror had been removed from her breast; she had always suspected that Lady Briancourt had really been guilty of the death of her husband—hence the dread she stood in of the insinuations of the lawyer.

Bitter was the scene of recrimination which ensued between Sir Phineas and his grandfather, when the former visited him in his cell in the borough prison, to which he had been committed.

"It is your meddling officiousness," he said; "your overweening confidence in your experience and tact, which has provoked this ruin! Fortune—name—both gone!"

"And do you blame me?"

"Whom have I to blame but you?" continued the young man, half-mad with rage and disappointment. "Pride would have kept Lady Briancourt silent, had you not provoked her—driven her in self-defence to disclose this fatal secret—which has made me a beggar! What am I to do?"

"You are young," observed the old man, with a sigh; "and for your life has many paths."

"Turn lawyer, I suppose?"

"The only thing you are fit for," retorted Quirk, stung by the ingratitude of his grandson; "for whom have I laboured and amassed wealth, but for you? And this is my recompense."

At the word "wealth," Sir Phineas paused in his career of passion—for he wisely remembered that the fortune of his relative was now his only hope.

"I am sure," he said, in a more subdued tone, "it is enough to deprive me of reason."

"As well as your gratitude," drily answered the lawyer.

"Forgive me! I would not willingly be unjust; but this accursed discovery has almost deprived me of my senses! First, Broadlands slipped through my fingers, and now the inheritance of my father!"

"And who told you that Broadlands had slipped through your fingers?" demanded the lawyer; "I have a surer hold upon it than you imagine."

"A mortgage?" eagerly inquired the pseudo-baronet.

"Listen to me," said his grandfather; "old Squire Broadlands left his estate to his grand-daughter, Clara. No discovery can shake her claims to it—the will is too clearly worded for that; and, upon her death—"

"To her child and children!" interrupted Sir Phineas, bitterly; "and is not her daughter the wife of this fellow Harland's son?"

"When you are patient, I will proceed," quietly observed Mr. Quirk.

"Well, there—there! I am patient. I will listen to you—not breathe a word, though it should rise in my throat and choke me!"

"Well, then," continued the lawyer; "there is another contingency in the will. In the event of Clara Briancourt's death, without heirs, your father was to inherit the property, on the same condition as his sister, after the death of their mother."

"She has left a child!" exclaimed the young man, forgetful of his promise to remain silent and hear him patiently.

"But not legitimate!" whispered Quirk, sinking his voice till it sounded like the hiss of a serpent, as he uttered the monstrous falsehood.

The eyes of Sir Phineas sparkled with joy at the intelligence. It was indeed a weapon which, if rightly used, might enable him to recover no insignificant portion of the property whose loss he mourned, even more than the title he had so long and so unworthily borne.

"Are you sure?" he said, "no mistake—no error this time?"

"Certain," said the old man. "Lady Briancourt employed me to discover where and when her daughter had been married to Captain Stanley, the son of the man she so bitterly hated! As you may suppose, I spared neither gold nor toil; but my work was fruitless! Not the least trace or evidence of the marriage ever having taken place could I discover!"

"His grandson warmly pressed the hand of the speaker.

"And what did she want with it?" he inquired.

"To destroy it! In her blind hatred against her son-in-law, she would have sacrificed the fair fame of her child! It was by my contrivance and her desires that Captain Stanley, under pretence of being provided for in a distant colony, was lured abroad, where he must have died—for I never heard of him since!"

"You have given me life!"

"Pooh!" answered Quirk; "I have given you what is far more valuable—revenge and fortune! Bide your time—wait till Lady Briancourt's death—then boldly

assert your claim! As for the Briancourt estate and title," he added, with a sigh, "they, I fear, are lost to you for ever!"

"I'll not resign them!"

"As you please!"

"Grandfather," said Sir Phineas, "your life has been one of expedients and danger! I know no common difficulty could appal you! Are there no means by which the claims of this upstart may be baffled?"

"None!" answered the lawyer, with a groan; "the chain of evidence is unbroken—nothing can break it! but you can consult Snape!"

Before separating, the lawyer wrote a long letter to his confidential clerk, detailing his position, and directing him to assist his grandson in his present extremity by every means in his power. To do him justice, he felt more for his ruin and disappointment than the equivocal, not to say dangerous position in which he himself was placed.

Sir Phineas started with the letter that same night.

No sooner had Mr. Snape read the communication from his employer than his manner, hitherto so obsequious, suddenly changed. He was of the true reptile breed, and knew the moment when he might securely sting.

He commenced by observing that he was a respectable man.

"No doubt of it!" replied the messenger, wondering to what point such an assertion, coupled with the unusual tone in which it was uttered, could possibly lead.

"And have served Mr. Quirk long and faithfully?"

"No doubt of it!" replied Sir Phineas; "the proof that my grandfather thinks so is in the unbounded confidence he places in you!"

"Very flattering, no doubt!" drily answered the clerk; "but confidence alone is not the recompense which a prudent man can rest contented with! My experience has given me a certain aptitude in the management of intricate and delicate affairs. I can command my salary in any office. In fact, I am tired of being a subordinate!"

"Snape!" exclaimed the young man, in a reproachful tone; "is this the moment to turn round and sting your benefactor?"

"I deny, sir, that Mr. Quirk has ever been a benefactor to me, or anything but a master; and as for the time, a wise man must either choose or make it!"

"In one word, what is it you require?"

"A partnership!"

"Preposterous!"

"In that case, your grandfather," coolly observed the clerk, "had better engage some other person to intrust his affairs to—I wash my hands of them!"

"But reflect!"

"I have reflected," interrupted Mr. Snape; "and you know the result of my deliberations!"

Entreaties were vain—the fellow was not to be moved from his resolution. It was finally arranged that he should proceed the following day to Colchester. He did so. When he returned, the ambition of his life was gratified—he was a partner!

CHAPTER LXI

Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul—
Sweetener of life, and soldier of society—
I owe thee much: thou hast deserved of me
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay. *Chalmers.*

MARGARET availed herself of the absence of her father to write both to Lady Briancourt and the sister of her love, Mary, who, with her happy husband, was spending the first weeks of her married life at the rectory at Fulton.

In her communication, the writer briefly described the manner in which she had been removed from the protection of her benefactress, and by whom. So much she felt was necessary to dispel the anxiety she felt on her account. The rest of her letters were filled with the praises of her long-sorrowing mother, of whose virtues she justly felt proud, and whose love had been poured, like a rich, healing balm, on the still bleeding wounds of her sad heart.

The letter to Mary was directed to the rectory at Fulton.

As soon as she had finished her correspondence, Margaret requested her mother to accompany her to the village post-office.

"Leave the house?" exclaimed Mabel, in a voice of terror.

"And why not?" demanded her daughter, with surprise.

"I have promised Ned—your father, I mean," replied the poor, broken-spirited creature, "never to quit the house—that is, in his absence," she added, not wishing to shock the feelings of her child, by hinting that she was virtually a prisoner.

"In that case, I must go alone," quietly observed Margaret.

This was worse and worse: she knew that the anger

of her husband would be fearful, should he discover that she had permitted their newly-recovered treasure to leave Bordercleugh without his permission—and she had not the courage to forbid her.

"Perhaps," she said, "I had better go with you—that is, if you have decided upon going."

"How else am I to post my letter?"

Mabel replied that her father would probably return that very night—or, at the latest, on the following morning.

"Mother," said Margaret, firmly, yet kindly, "I cannot permit the kind friends to whom I owe so much—who love me, and whom I love—to remain in unnecessary suspense on my account. I am no longer a child—sorrow has made me a woman—given me a strength and decision of character beyond my years—I am bound by no promise—shall bind myself by none!"

"But your father—"

"Shall be treated by me with respect, because he is my father! I will do all that I can to please him; but I will never become the slave of a caprice which I cannot understand!"

The calm tone in which these few words were uttered, revealed to her mother a new trait in the character of her child: she perceived, with regret, that she had inherited the firmness of Ned; tempered, however, with those pure and virtuous principles which he unfortunately had never possessed.

"I will accompany you," she said, after a few moments' reflection; "my husband can't be very angry."

Margaret looked at her with painful surprise.

"Is it possible," she asked, in an earnest tone, "that you fear my father?"

Mabel turned aside, as if she had not heard the question: she could not bring her lips to utter a lie to her child—still less did she wish to draw aside the veil, and expose the true character of her tyrant in all its hideous deformity.

"Heaven support and give me patience," murmured the unhappy girl, as her parent left the room to prepare for their walk; "I feel that I have a terrible struggle before me." And then she wondered how a pure and gentle nature like her mother's could have consented to become the wife of a man like Ned Cantor.

When Mabel returned, she was attired in the old bonnet and shawl in which she had been brought to Bordercleugh. In her perturbation she had never once thought of the effect her wretched appearance might produce upon her daughter. It was the first time for several years that she had quitted the old house.

"Mother," said Margaret, tenderly embracing her, "it is possible that you have no other dress?"

"I go out so little, darling," replied Mabel, with a faint blush; "but probably your father will bring me one."

"And no servant!" murmured the poor girl, in a tone of sorrow; "and he boasts that he is rich."

"I expect one to-day," said her mother, nervously; "the fault has been my own. Indeed—indeed, Ned himself proposed it to me."

She was so in the habit both of calling and speaking of her husband by his Christian name, that even with her daughter she could not avoid it.

"You are not ashamed of me?" added the poor woman, in a tone of humility.

"Ashamed of you!" repeated Margaret; "how little do you know my heart, dear mother. No! I am proud of you—proud of your patience, suffering, and love—of your pure, virtuous mind; even my father praised them. I can respect you!"

"Hush!" whispered her parent, "you must not breathe such words. Poor Ned would feel them as a reproach."

The prisoner expressed an almost childish pleasure in once more walking in the fresh air of heaven, supported as she was by the arm of her daughter, whose presence made her forget her terror of the probable anger of her husband, for having, for the first time in her life, disobeyed his commands.

We say the first time, for—unless urged to the contrary by the dictates of her conscience—Mabel had been from the first hour of her ill-starred marriage, the passive slave of her tyrant.

"How deliciously the heather smells!" she exclaimed as they approached that part of the moor which skirted the little village; "and see, the blue-bell is still in bloom. Earth never wore a countenance so smiling and radiant to my sight as now."

Her daughter listened to these and similar observations in silent thoughtfulness.

"Mother," she said, at last, "you speak like one who has long been deprived of these simple pleasures. Like one," she added, fixing her eyes upon her pale features, "who had been a prisoner!"

"I never stood, unless as a witness, before a magistrate or a court of justice in my life!" was the reply.

Margaret sighed—she marked the equivocation of her answer, and painfully divined its motive.

Many and curious were the glances which the loiterers in the village cast, as the two females passed through the straggling street, till they reached the post-office, which adjoined the Moretown Arms. It had been rumoured that Mr. Cantor had returned home the previous night, accompanied by a very beautiful lady, and many and various were the speculations concerning her.

As they returned past the door of the little inn, a tall and rather gentlemanly-looking young man, whose dress denoted that he belonged to the superior class of farmers, raised his hat respectfully.

"Well done, Frank Hasleton!" said one of the party who were standing near the door; "you will have Cantor about your ears!"

"And what need I care for him?" was the reply. "He is everything with my lord!" observed a second.

"But neither he nor my lord can cancel the lease of our farm as long as we pay our rent; and I never knew any one of the Hasletons behindhand at the audit, yet!"

With this brief conversation the subject dropped. Margaret and Mabel were already out of sight.

"I really think," said the latter, "that the walk has done me good!"

"I am sure it has!" replied her daughter. "You must renew it every day, and I will be your companion!"

Her mother remained silent—for she was far from feeling assured how her husband would approve of such an arrangement; and the poor victim of domestic tyranny, unless urged by a sense of duty, had no longer the spirit to resist.

At an abrupt angle of the road they encountered a gentleman, who no sooner recognized Margaret, than he advanced briskly towards her, and held out his hand.

"Sir Cuthbert Sinclair!" she exclaimed, in a tone of undisguised surprise.

"Yes, my dear child!" said the baronet; "I am most anxious to speak with you. Perhaps this person will either precede or follow us!" he added, at the same time offering her his arm.

"This person," observed Margaret, "is my mother!"

The old gentleman raised his hat to the meekly-dressed, careworn-looking Mabel with as much stately politeness as he would have done to a duchess at St. James's—so struck was he with the simple, quiet dignity with which the words were uttered.

The poor girl looked her thanks.

"If you wish to speak with this gentleman," said her mother, in a hesitating tone, "I will follow you! I am sure I may trust you with him!"

"You may, indeed!" exclaimed the baronet, warmly; "for she is dear to me as my own child!"

It would be difficult to say whether Margaret or her parent felt most gratified by this kind avowal of Sir Cuthbert Sinclair's feelings.

The former no longer hesitated to accept his proffered arm, and Mabel fell gradually behind, in order to afford them an opportunity of conversing without restraint.

"I have seen my nephew!" said the baronet; "I know that the subject is a painful one," he added—for he felt the arm within his tremble; "but it is necessary that I should speak of him!"

"The heart is very weak!" observed Margaret; "our affections are the snares in which it becomes entangled!"

"You are right!" said the old man, charmed with her frankness; "believe me, I will not give you unnecessary pain, by dwelling upon the past! You love Harry still?"

There was a pause of some moments before his companion could answer him.

"No, Sir Cuthbert!" she answered, with a firmness which delighted him; "I cannot love where I have ceased to respect! The ideal Harry Sinclair to whom I gave my girlish affection, was generous, truthful, kind, and noble: he would not have taken advantage of my misery, to insult me by a proposal which my lips refuse to repeat; he would have pitied my agony—respected my tears! Your nephew does not resemble him! The mask has fallen—my heart is seared—crushed like some ruined shrine! But the idol no longer hath an altar there!"

"I rejoice—deeply do I rejoice—to hear you say so!" exclaimed the old man, with an animation which startled his companion. "I sent for my nephew, pointed out the utter want of delicacy and feeling—to say nothing of honour—he had betrayed, and expressed my readiness to receive you as my niece!"

"Generous man!" murmured the grateful girl.

"He avowed that you were still dear to him—but declared that you could never be his wife!"

"He was right—quite right!" answered Margaret, proudly. "The man who can attempt to degrade the woman he professes to love, is unworthy of her!"

"Margaret," said the baronet, "listen to me—but do not answer me now; reflect upon my words, and

consult your understanding rather than your heart: it is the surest guide through life! I have a secret to impart to you!"

"A secret?"

"Yes! The worthlessness of Harry—there, it is the last time I will pronounce his name—has unsealed my lips! I love you, Margaret! Not with the headstrong passion of youth, but with that deep and quiet affection which mingles the tenderness of a father with the ardour of the lover's feelings! I offer you my hand and name—a shelter from the storms of life—a position in the world—a home, where my untiring devotion shall anticipate your every wish! I say nothing of vast fortune," he added; "the plea were alike unworthy of both of us!"

"I—I a wife!" faltered the astonished girl. "Oh, never—never! Believe me, I am grateful, most grateful, for a preference which restores to me my self-respect! I esteem you, love you, Sir Cuthbert, like a father; but cannot consent to repay your noble, disinterested conduct by bringing reproach upon a name so honoured as the one you proffer me!"

"I am the guardian of that!" answered the old man, proudly; "but I told you that I would not receive your answer now, and shall consider your refusal as unspoken! The home to which you have been forced," he added, "is not a home of love, nor suited to the tastes, feelings, and habits of a mind like yours! Your father—"

"Do not name him," interrupted Margaret, with a shudder; "and yet he means kindly towards me! I have one parent," she added, "whom at least I can respect and love—my good and suffering mother! Would you believe," she added, "that, when I was first stolen from her, sustained only by her love for her lost child, she traversed England on foot, in the hope of recovering me? She needs a protector—and where would she find one, if her child abandoned her?"

"As Lady Sinclair, you would be enabled to protect her far more efficiently than in your present position!" urged Sir Cuthbert. "Your home would then become hers. Reflect on what I have said, and write to me, should you require either my presence or advice. The laird of the Moretown Arms was formerly in my service; he is faithful: a letter addressed to me through him will always reach me."

His companion remained silent.

"You promise to write to me," continued the baronet, "in the event of requiring my protection?"

"Yes!"

"And now farewell!" added the old man, raising her hand respectfully to his lips; "you are already in sight of home, and require no further escort! Weigh well my offer, and, as I said, let reason, and not feeling, decide!"

(To be continued.)

THE GAY TRIFLER.

"I HEARD yesterday that you were engaged to Eveline Valliere, and to-day I hear that you are to marry Sophy Greene. Which report is true?" said Edgar Thomas to his friend Harry Colbert, and taking his cigar from his mouth he suffered the smoke to curl slowly to the ceiling, gazing meantime on the face of his friend.

"The fact is," said Harry, throwing himself back in his chair, "I am engaged to neither," and then he paused.

"But you are very attentive to Sophy, and those who go to Miss Valliere's set say you are devoted to her," and again the speaker's eye was fixed inquiringly on Harry, who looked down momentarily disconcerted.

"Why, the truth is," said he, looking up, "I am a little in love with both of the ladies, so I can't make up my mind to marry either, lest I should lose the other. I wish the good qualities of both were combined in one; then I should soon decide. Miss Valliere is amiable, pretty, and rich, and so far is just what I want; but she has no wit, and would never be a wife to make one proud of abroad. Sophy is poor, and without Eveline's fine figure, though, perhaps, with a prettier, and certainly with a more intellectual looking face. Then she has a fine wit, and is decidedly a girl of talent. With a little tact she might be made a perfectly fascinating creature. I don't say which has the most womanly heart; I suppose either could love deeply enough," and here the speaker adjusted his collar. "When I am with Sophy I am in love with her, but when I see Eveline, and think of her fortune, I cannot resist paying her attention. I had gone pretty far with Eveline before I met Miss Greene; but since then I have been more careful, and I confess am often puzzled how to decide. If Eveline had Sophy's intellect, or Sophy had Eveline's fortune, I should propose to-morrow; but the fates have ordered it otherwise, and so—poor dog that I am—I must wait for events, and trust to my destiny."

"Did you ever commit yourself to Miss Valliere?" asked his companion, after a pause.

"Not exactly," answered Harry, slowly and doubtfully; "to be sure I did, at one time, pay her considerable attention, but then, you know, a pretty girl is used to such things, and, if she has sense, never thinks you serious unless you make love in words. Now I never did that exactly, and in that I am lucky, though I do confess to sundry sentimental walks, and sly attentions when the old folks were away—you understand, just enough to keep her thinking of me sufficiently to ensure success if I should at any time make up my mind to marry her. I began to think lately I ought to back out, and I am not half so attentive as I once was; for, the fact is, since I met Sophy Greene, I have felt that Miss Valliere is not the girl to suit me as a wife. I wish something not to be ashamed of in society of people of talent. I wish the gods had given Sophy a fortune; for—confound it—I'm too poor, to wed a portionless wife."

Harry Colbert had frankly explained the difficulty in which he had involved himself, but he had not told the whole truth; for his attentions to both girls had been assiduous and devoted, and of such a character as to leave no doubt on their minds of the serious nature of his attention. Moving in different sets, in opposite sections of a large city, each was ignorant of his attention to her rival; and thus for several months he had carried on his deception undetected. He had already wooed and won Eveline Valliere, though he had never told his love in words, before he met Sophy Greene; from that hour his heart had been divided, and the conflict in his breast had raged with increasing force daily. Interest, and perhaps some little remaining conscience, urged him to marry Eveline; while, if he had consulted only his feelings, he would have wedded Sophy.

"But," said his friend, after an embarrassing silence of some minutes, "do you not think sometimes that you may have won the affections of both?"

"I never proposed to either," replied Harry, staring at his companion.

"But does a lady never place her affections on a gentleman until he proposes in form? Is there no such thing as winning a lady by looks and tones, which, though not explicit in one sense are susceptible of but a single definition?" asked his friend.

"Oh! perhaps some girls lose their hearts thus; but it's only when they know nothing of the world. Gentlemen will be attentive to the ladies, and so—and so—"

"And so sometimes a heart will be broken by the criminal coquetry of our sex," indignantly interrupted the other. There was a pause, during which Harry regarded his friend with surprise. At length he spoke:

"Why, really, you look at the subject too warmly; but calm your fears; neither Sophy nor Miss Valliere will break their hearts for me, thank Heaven! If either is at all smitten," and he complacently puffed the smoke slowly from his mouth, "she would never be the worse of it, even if I shouldn't marry her—a mere preference, nothing more, believe me!"

"Well, I hope so," said his companion, and here the conversation ceased.

Days and weeks passed, and still Harry was torn by conflicting emotions, one while inclining towards the heiress, and another while yielding to the fascinations of her rival.

Often during this period his conscience reproached him for his conduct to Eveline, and he resolved to forget Sophy; but again he yielded to the temptation, and neglected his first love. He could no longer conceal from himself that Miss Valliere loved him, since her every look and action, when in his presence, and her despondency at his absence and neglect, revealed it. His heart smote him when he thought this was his work; but he asked himself, ought he to wed one whom he did not love?

Should he sacrifice happiness with Sophy, who had an intellect to sympathize with him, for indifference with Eveline? He did not remember, when he thus reasoned with himself, that he had at one time thought Miss Valliere better fitted for a wife, by her gentleness and unreserved devotion, than one of a more brilliant but less amiable character. He forgot, too, that her affection had been yielded slowly, and only in return of the most ceaseless attention. But, like too many of his sex, he tired of an object when won.

But the struggle at length was terminated, and, with the fickleness which characterized his conduct, terminated in favour of the newer object of his love. He resolved to cease visiting Eveline, and devote himself wholly to Miss Greene.

His visits accordingly increased in frequency at her house; and he soon became satisfied that her attentions to him were more marked than those she had bestowed on any other young men. Thus encouraged he did not hesitate to declare himself to her one evening when a favourable opportunity presented.

Sophy listened to his ardent protestations with a burning cheek and beating bosom; but when he ceased, she slowly raised her eyes from the ground, and said:

"Before I can consent to become your wife, will you answer me one question?" and fixing her eyes searchingly on his face, though her face crimsoned deeper as she did it, "Do you know Eveline Valliere?"

Had a spectre started up before him, Harry would not have looked more aghast. What could she mean? Had she heard of his attention to, and his desertion of Miss Valliere? Did she resent the latter, or had she merely learned the former, and wished to solve her doubts before answering? This last idea was the most flattering, and therefore the one adopted. He smiled as he replied:

"Yes; I once knew a lady of that name."

"Once knew her!" said Sophy, with marked emphasis, "and do you know her no longer?"

"I can scarcely say I do," said Harry, his embarrassment returning at the decided manner of his questioner, "but she has long forgotten me, and I have ceased visiting her."

"There needed only this baseness," said Sophy, rising, with flashing eyes, the whole expression of her face changing to indignant scorn, "to make you as contemptible in my eyes as you were before criminal. Know, false and fickle man, that I heard the whole history of your acquaintance with Miss Valliere; how, by slow and winning attention, you possessed yourself of her heart; how, when you met another, who, for the time, pleased your selfish nature better, you became attentive to this new acquaintance; and how, notwithstanding you knew the love Miss Valliere bore for you, you at length left her to pine in despondency, until her life is now despaired of by her friends. And yet you come here and dare to insult me with an offer of your love!"—she spoke this word with bitter scorn—"you! the almost murderer of one woman, and the wronger thereby of our whole sex. Aye! more—you hesitated long, because, forsooth, I was too poor, as if love, that holy sentiment, of which such wretches as you can know nothing, was to be profaned by base thoughts of lucre. I tell you, Harry Colbert, I have known all this for weeks, and have waited patiently for this hour, stooping to a deception which I despise, that I might revenge my sex at last. You seek a woman's love! Why, you know no more of that pure sentiment, than the meanest hind that crouches at the master's whip. A true woman scorns the hand of a man like you, who, for the gratification of a petty vanity, or of his own selfishness, would desert a heart that he had won. The time was when I might have loved you, but it was when I thought your heart noble. I now see its baseness, duplicity, and littleness, and, base as you are, I cannot hate you, from very scorn. Go!—and go knowing this, that a woman can avenge her sex at the cost of so petty a lover as yourself!"

The withering contempt with which these words were spoken, was the last drop in the cup of the lover's shame.

While Sophy had continued speaking, he had stood abashed before her, not daring to lift his eyes but once to her face, and then the indignant flash of her eyes, and the bitter mockery on her lip, were no temptation to renew the experiment. And when she ceased, he rose and almost rushed from the room, too utterly confounded to reply, though boiling with rage and shame.

He reached his room in a tempest of emotions indescribable. But his passion was too high to allow him to see the justice of his fate.

"Curse the girl!" was the first exclamation, "she raved like a Pythoness—but why did I not retort scorn for scorn? To refuse me when she is not worth a shilling, and all because of Eveline!" and he breathed a malediction on her as the cause of his discomfiture, and with bitter exclamations strode to and fro in his room.

Gradually, however, his passion calmed itself, and a desire for revenge possessed his mind. But how should he be revenged? Should he woo and win some other lady at once, or go back to Miss Valliere and secure her?

After pondering long, he determined on the latter course.

"Yes!" said he, "if I marry Eveline, to whom it is known I have been attentive, this termagant will never dare to tell of my proposal, for we had no witnesses, and no one will believe her, if it should be announced soon, say to-morrow or next day at farthest, that I am engaged to the heiress. She loves me, no doubt—there this vixen was right—and will be glad to accept me. I will despatch a note at once. A little dissimulation to conceal the cause of my late neglect, a little penitence adroitly thrown in, and a little ardour, will win a favourable answer, or I know nothing of the trusting nature of Eveline Valliere."

The proposal was written and sent, but the next

day, the next, and a whole week passed without an answer. Harry began to repent of his precipitance, and wished that he had never seen either Eveline or Sophy. But at length came the reply. He opened it with renewed hopes, which, however, were crushed on its perusal. The answer was short and cold, and contained a refusal, couched in terms which forbade a second attempt. "Miss Valliere," the note ended with saying, "declines all further acquaintance with Mr. Colbert."

Stung to the quick, the rejected lover vented his rage on both the women he had abused, and determined yet to avenge himself by a speedy marriage. But he soon found that his conduct was known in society; though not from anything which Eveline or Sophy had said, but from rumour originating probably with their relatives, and gained strength from what had been observed of Harry's conduct. At length the tide of scorn and rebuke became so strong that he left the city and removed to another section of the country.

Harry never knew the struggle in Eveline's heart, nor the noble firmness with which she conquered it. His letter reached her on a sick bed, where she had been laid by his perfidy; but, though her weak heart pleaded for him, her convictions of what was right prevailed, and she rejected him; because she felt that she could never find happiness with one so base, fickle and selfish.

Both she and Sophy Greene lived to love truly and worthily, and the friendship begun by their mutual disappointment was cemented by intimacy, and endured through long and happy lives.

As for Harry, he carried with him his own punishment. Providence rarely interferes in the affairs of ordinary life, except by enervating us with our evil habits, and thus making us work on ourselves our own retribution.

These habits Harry carried with him, nor could he shake them off. His character soon became as well-known in his new residence as in the city he had left.

At length, however, he married; but as he wedded without love, he lived without happiness. Well were his victims avenged on the Trifler.

E. A.

SUNSHINE OF THE HEART.

WHEN clouds arise and hide from view
The sun's effulgent rays,
And pattering rains the earth bedew,
And cheerless are our ways,
Oh, then 'tis sweet to feel within
A throbbing that knows no smart,
Dispelling sorrow that would dim
The sunshine of the heart.

Sweet rosy youth, bedecked around
With hope's fair budding flowers,
And joyous smiles proude about
In those delightful hours;
But soon they're gone, and sombre age
Reviews each fading part,
And gleams from memory's golden page
The sunshine of the heart.

Then seek to crown declining life
With gems from virtue's light,
Accept the toil and join the strife
And battle for the right;
Then ripened years and sweet content,
Sweet halo will impart,
And memory gild our monument
With sunshine of the heart.

W. H.

A FRUITLESS CROWN.

They placed upon my head a fruitless crown.

MARIAN HARLOWE was a beautiful girl; and she knew it. She ought to know it; for her mirror always told her so—her proud father and her admiring mother had told her so: scores of fascinated young men had told her so, and even her school acquaintances had not been slow to praise her. Her beauty was of the clear, cold, statuesque style; but, artistically considered, it was faultless. To be sure, one might easily have wished it to be touched with a little more life and warmth, to make it more human and consequently more loveable in this work-day world; but no one could deny that she was beautiful, stately, queenlike, graceful, and accomplished. Whether she was beloved or not, she was certainly admired; and a respectable addition to the city directory might have been made by taking the census of her admirers.

Yet cold was the maid, and though thousands advanced, all drilled by Ovidian art, and languished and ogled, protested and dined, like shadows they came, and like shadows they glanced. From the hard-polished ice of her heart.

To one only of her many admirers did she fair Marian ever appear to warm. Charley Adams was a

young merchant who had lately commenced business, with a very fair prospect of success, but who, as yet, was comparatively unknown, and found his business scarcely sufficient to support himself. He was not only handsome, but intelligent, warm-hearted, strong-minded, and respected by all who knew him. Charley Adams loved Marian truly and deeply, though not passionately, with a sincere, earnest and manly love—such a love as endures and is not to be changed by accidents of time and fortune. He knew her faults; but hoped that by experience and the counsels of a loving heart they might be mitigated, if not removed. Marian's feelings towards him were those of great respect, which might have ripened into love, if she had permitted her heart to have its way. If she felt any real love for him, however, she repressed it, and only showed such slight preference as permitted him to hope that in time she might love him.

The plain truth is, that Marian Harlowe resolved to marry rich, if she married at all. Her youth had been spent in ease, luxury, and elegance—nothing that her needs or caprices could ask for having ever been denied her; but after her father's failure, the family had been reduced to comparative poverty, and Marian felt its pressure very severely.

Her father, who had at first been broken down by the catastrophe, had regained his strength and spirits, and had become contented with his lot; while her mother was much more cheerful and happy than she had been in their days of affluence; but to Marian, the loss of balls, parties, operas, concerts, and all the luxuries procured by wealth, was irksome in the extreme.

She saw no way of regaining her lost station, except by marrying rich, and that she was determined to do, if possible. She regarded her beauty as the only means to this end that she possessed; and as such she meant to use it. She looked upon her suitors in the light of availability, and balanced her charms against their purses. So far, the beauty had weighed down the cash, in her scales.

One pleasant evening in July, Adams called upon Marian, resolved to speak to her plainly, and to learn his fate, once for all. They sat by the open window; and after some general conversation, he spoke to her of the business which had brought him there that evening.

"Marian," said he, gravely and earnestly, "you know that I love you, and it is useless for me to tell you how great and strong my love is. I believe that you have some love for me, and I have hoped that in time it would increase, until you would consent to marry me. Is my hope wholly in vain?"

Marian looked once into his large, dark, and eloquent eyes, and the colour suddenly mantled in her cheeks and brow; then she held down her head, and seemed to fear to trust herself to speak. Her lover had taken her hand; but she withdrew it gently, and answered him:

"If I love any one, Charley, I love you. You have been as a brother to me, and I hope you will continue to be so, and will always love me, whether you esteem me or not. That you should be more to me, is impossible—as I am engaged."

"Engaged!" exclaimed Adams, in astonishment. "You are really engaged to be married? May I ask to whom?"

"You may have noticed that Mr. Bancker has frequently visited here of late. His visits have been to me. Last night he asked me to marry him, and I have accepted. We are to be married next month."

"Have you accepted him, or his bank-book?" said Adams, unable to repress his surprise.

"Both," answered Marian, with firmness, though her cheeks flushed, and her lip trembled. "Of course, you know that I would not have accepted him if he had not been wealthy. Reproach me as you please; blame me as you please; I suppose I deserve it; I am tired of being poor, wearied, and worn out with longing to lead a life of luxury and fashion again, and I am sure that I would never have a more splendid offer. Perhaps you may call me vain and artless, but I have determined to be rich, and I will be."

"Do you love him, Marian?"

"It is not a question of love."

"Do you think that he loves you?"

"He thinks I will make a fine parlour ornament, a dignified and elegant mistress of his house."

"It is useless for me to remonstrate, Marian, but I cannot congratulate you, for I fear that you are placing upon your head a fruitless crown."

"Don't be poetical, Charley, or sentimental, but come to see me often, and be sure to come to the wedding, and you will see how I will wear my crown. You may be certain it will be a brilliant one."

"I hope it may prove an easy one!" said Adams, with a sigh. He went away with a saddened heart, for it was not until he discovered that he had lost Marian, that he fully realized how much he had loved her. But he had expected the loss, and had schooled himself to bear it. His sadness was occasioned more

by fears for Marian's happiness than by grief at her rejection of him, and he resolved to watch over and to promote her welfare as far as was in his power.

Charley Adams received cards to the wedding. The wealth of the bridegroom and the beauty of the bride had brought together a large concourse of fashionables, among whom Charley seated himself, concealed from the observation of Marian. It was said by "everybody" that the match was a splendid one for Miss Harlowe, as Mr. Bancker was immensely rich, and in the enjoyment of a constantly-increasing income from his business. It was true that he was turned of fifty, and had a daughter nearly out of her teens; but he had a fine mansion in town, and a neat villa in the country. The envious called him cold and mercenary; but the bridal presents he had made to Marian were worth a small fortune. It was said that his former wife had lived a life of sorrow and pain, and that her death had been hastened by neglect and ill-treatment; but this was regarded by the exultant Marian as senseless slander.

Marian wore her crown with the queenly grace and royal air which were so natural to her, and which became her so well. Indeed, her bridal wreath looked much like a crown. As her diamonds flashed their lustre in her face, she thought, almost triumphantly, "Will Charley Adams call this a fruitless crown?" The bridegroom was cold, stately, and correct. He went through with his portion of the ceremony with the dignity of a judge, and the composure of a statue. The father and mother of the beautiful bride seemed out of place in the midst of the splendour, and evidently did not feel at home. Charley Adams had no desire to show his face to Marian, to cast a shadow over her joy, and left the church as soon as the marriage was concluded.

Mr. Bancker took his splendid wife and his daughter Eveline to France; and, during the tour, Marian might almost have been called happy. She was certainly joyful, exhilarated, exultant. Her husband was kind, and, indeed, over-indulgent. Marian could not express a wish that was not immediately gratified. Dresses, servants, equipage, and all the utmost caprice could desire, she possessed in abundance.

Mr. Bancker, probably, loved her; he certainly admired her beauty, as did every one else; but if he felt for her what the young and fresh-hearted call love, it was entirely unobtrusive in its character; Marian never felt it, and she never cared to. She was his wife, the mistress of his house, his choicest ornament, the jewel which he had bought to shine upon his breast, and which belonged to him.

He only desired her to maintain the dignity which he expected from his wife, and in other matters allowed her fully to have her own way. Marian was approached by lovers or admirers, in the continental style; but it was for her interest as well as for her honour to keep them at a distance, and she did so. No woman knew how to preserve her position better than the beautiful wife of the wealthy Thomas Bancker. She had thought that she could live without love, if an unlimited control of riches was guaranteed to her; but she found all this splendour irksome at times, nearly as much so as her former poverty, and she sighed for love. At such times she occasionally thought of Charley Adams, but she did not often succumb to this weakness.

New jewels, new entertainments, new delights surrounded and entranced her. She had hoped that Eveline might love her; but the young girl's affection was of that cold and quiet kind, which almost amounted to indifference.

Marian loved to dress her finely, and to take her into the gay world; but Eveline was entirely different from her young stepmother, and took little delight in the "pumps and vanities" which absorbed the life of the latter. So Marian Bancker moved on—in *credit* regina—in the beautiful world she had bought.

Like the moon, without atmosphere, brilliant and clear,
But still, like the moon, with no being to cheer,
The bright, barren waste of her mind.

They were abroad more than three months, and not until their return did Marian consider that her regal life had fairly begun. She then launched out upon the brilliant sea of London fashionable society. She rode upon the topmost wave, and knew how to rule those troubled and deceitful waters. She took everything by storm, and was "monarch of all she surveyed." The expenses during her wedding tour were nothing to her present extravagance—elegant and costly entertainments succeeded each other rapidly at Mr. Bancker's mansion, until the season was over.

Marian's husband had again become absorbed in his business, and seldom saw his young wife, except at her frequent entertainments, at which he watched her closely, and drank large quantities of wine. It got to be a common inquiry of those who attended her parties, "Was old Bancker tipsy?" Marian cared little about this, so long as he preserved the properties, and supplied her plentifully with money; but after a while he spoke occasionally of her expense,

and accused her of extravagance. Marian was indignant, and gave him plainly to understand that she had married him for his money, and meant to use it. His reproaches and threats only stimulated her to new excesses, and if she loved to be talked about, she enjoyed that distinction to her heart's content.

Charley Adams, who was prospering in business, wished to see his old love, to advise and counsel her, but this was not permitted. Mr. Bancker had taken it into his head to be jealous of the young merchant, and had given Marian to understand that he did not desire her to receive his visits. This prohibition had been a bitter pill for her to swallow; but as her obedience enabled her to make fresh demands upon her husband's purse, she soon submitted with a good grace. Mr. Bancker had also informed her that her father and mother were no longer welcome at his house; and to this also she had submitted, receiving permission to visit them occasionally at home. She was careful not to call upon them when she would be likely to meet Charley Adams. She feared that he might ask her about her crown, and she already began to doubt whether it was not a fruitless one.

Marian had made great calculations upon the summer season. As it approached, she urged her husband to take a villa at Newport. He refused, declaring that her extravagance was ruining him, and that such an expense would be more than he could afford. Marian laughed at the idea of his not being able to afford anything she wished. There was a stormy scene; but woman's wit and woman's will carried the day, and a splendid establishment was procured at Newport. Mr. Bancker accompanied his wife thither, and soon returned to the city.

Rumours soon began to be rife concerning his credit, seriously affecting his business reputation. Indeed, it had often been said, during the winter, that Thomas Bancker was speculating wildly and at random. These who claimed to know, counted up his losses during a few months, and pronounced them to amount to a fortune. During the summer, the talk increased, and Mr. Bancker and his affairs were a subject of general remark among business-men.

"It was true, however; and the crisis could not be long delayed. Marian learned from the morning paper, before she received the news in any other manner, the astounding intelligence that Thomas Bancker, Esq., had suddenly left for America, and had been discovered to be a defaulter in a large amount to the insurance company of which he was the treasurer and managing director. The paper also contained explanations, telling very plainly what was known and suspected of his life during the past year, and hinting very strongly at the extravagance of his family as having been a chief cause of his ruin. He left no word for his wife; but a little note for Eveline, stating that he was a ruined and disgraced man, and that she might thank her stepmother for his fall.

Marian was shocked; the blow stunned her at first, but her pride was equal to the occasion. She was ice, she was marble, she was steel, and whatever she felt, she did not let her mortification be seen. She sent immediately for Mr. Adams. He came, and found her in the midst of trouble; creditors were harrassing her; everything seemed about to be swept away, and she knew no one else to call upon for advice and succour. She could not have had a better counsellor than Charley Adams. A judicious speculation had made him almost rich, and his clear head and strong common sense were just what she needed in her adversity. As he entered, she let loose her long pent-up feelings, and exclaimed, bursting into tears:

"Charles, I placed upon my head a fruitless crown!"

He endeavoured to console her, and promised to do all he could to aid her. His promise was well performed; and partly by his exertions, and partly by the use of his money and credit, he secured her a pittance sufficient to place her above actual poverty. Marian blessed him, and sank into listlessness and despondency. At this time the gentle but noble character of Eveline shone out. She suddenly became a woman; she counselled and comforted her stepmother, and declared her intention of giving music-lessons. By the aid of Mr. Adams and his friends she obtained scholars, and added largely to their slender income. Charley Adams often called upon them, and Marian fondly imagined, though she did not dare to hope, that his visits were intended for her. Thus they lived for months, until Marian learned of the violent death of her husband in a gambling-saloon in America.

Charley Adams hastened to see her upon hearing this news, and Marian then hoped that he would declare the continuance of his old love. She was mistaken; he came to ask the hand of Eveline, whom he loved, and who loved him.

They were married. Marian, having lost her fruitless crown, now bears her cross contentedly.

E. W.

LORD BROUGHAM FROM A FRENCH POINT OF VIEW.—Lord Brougham, as we all know, is a naturalized Frenchman; but yet, according to English law, he has not forfeited his rights as a British subject or his rank as a peer. Lord Brougham is one of the great influences of England. Age has neither impaired his body nor his mind. At eighty years of age he supports fatigue as if he were a youth, and, after having passed all the day on horseback, he will read two volumes, write twenty letters, and drink two bottles of Bourdeaux.

A BRAVE LAD!—A few days ago, while Lord Broke was strolling on the beach of the Sussex coast, near Worthing, at ebb-tide, an infant in charge of a nurse wandered away to a place where it was surrounded by the water coming in, and was carried along with the tide into the deeps which alternate with the shallows along this coast. Lord Broke, although unable to swim, dashed in without a moment's hesitation, and succeeded in saving the child, after being once or twice overwhelmed by the waves. Lord Broke, the eldest son of the Earl of Warwick, is a boy eleven years of age.

LANGUAGE OF INSECTS.

A MOST singular discovery is that of the antennal language of insects. Bees and other insects are provided, as everybody knows, with feelers or antennæ. These are, in fact, most delicate organs of touch, warning of dangers, and serving the animals to hold a sort of conversation with each other, and to communicate their desires and wants. A strong hive of bees will contain thirty-six thousand workers. Each of these, in order to be assured of the presence of their queen, touches her every day with its antennæ.

Should the queen die, or be removed, the whole colony disperse themselves, and are seen in the hive no more, perishing every one, and quitting all the store of now useless honey which they had laboured so industriously to collect for the use of themselves and the larvae. On the contrary, should the queen be put into a small wire cage placed at the bottom of the hive, so that her subjects can touch and feed her, they are contented, and the business of the hive proceeds as usual.

Antennal power of communication is not confined to bees. Wasps and ants, and probably other insects, exercise it. If a caterpillar is placed near an ants' nest, a curious scene will often arise. A solitary ant will perhaps discover it, and eagerly attempt to draw it away. Not being able to accomplish this, it will go up to another ant, and, by means of the antennal language, bring it to the caterpillar. Still, these two, perhaps, are unable to perform the task of moving it. They will separate and bring up reinforcements of the community by the same means, till a sufficient number are collected to enable them to drag the caterpillar to their nest.

STEEL ARMOUR PLATES.—Mr. Bessemer, the man of steel, talks of "nine-inch steel armour-plates." He proposes the idea to Government, and tells them that he is making steel plates for foreign vessels, and thousands of steel shots for Russia.

A FAMILY DIVISION.—A telegram from Hamburg states that Duke Charles of Glücksburg, the eldest brother of King Christian, has left Denmark, after refusing to take the oath of allegiance to his brother. This telegram is utterly incorrect. The duke is on the best terms with his brother, and was present, a few days ago, at the dinner to the Rigsdag, and was one of the loudest in his approval of the patriotic sentiments of the king.

THE CHRISTENING OF THE INFANT PRINCE.—Nothing has been positively arranged as to the time and locality of the christening of the son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, but we believe it will take place in St. George's Chapel, and that the precedent will be followed of the ceremony at the christening of the Princess Charlotte, the daughter of George IV., as far as compatible with modern customs.

A LUCRATIVE USHERSHIP.—The death of the late Lord Clare has relieved the suitors of the Court of Chancery in Ireland of a heavy tax called "usher poundage." His father, when Lord Chancellor, had his son, the late peer, then a mere youth, appointed to the lucrative office of "usher to the Court of Chancery." The income was upwards of £5,000 a year—a tempting prize.

GOOD NEWS FOR SOMEBODY.—The Lord Mayor of London has had a singular commission imposed upon him. A naturalized citizen of the United States left to his lordship £3,867, to be distributed among such poor families in England as had suffered in their fortunes from the "bankruptcy" of the Spanish Government. Bankruptcy is the word used, though it is not the legal term to describe a long-deferred payment.



[KIEL.]

GERMANY AND DENMARK.

THE city of Kiel—the subject of our illustration—engrosses, at the present moment, the most intense public attention. In that little northern capital has strength culminated the long-standing difficulty between "Denmark and the Duchies," and from it there seems every reason to fear the "dogs of war" will be let loose once more in Europe. German troops have invaded Danish territory, and taken possession of this Danish city; and, perhaps, even while we write, the hostile forces of Prussia and Austria on one side, and those of Denmark on the other, have met in deadly conflict.

Those who have not hitherto followed the course of this perplexing "Schleswig-Holstein question," or even many of those who have tried to do so, may probably find themselves in the difficulty felt by Campbell's "little Peterkin," and ask "what they kill each other for?" The answer might very well be the dubious negative which was given to the poet's puzzled inquirer; but we will try briefly to explain something of the reason why.

We need not go further into the complexities of the question than November of last year. On the 16th of the month, the King of Denmark, Frederick VII., died; and by his decease became extinct the dynasty of Oldenburg, which had for several centuries supplied kings to Denmark, and at the same time ducal rulers over the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg. A collateral branch of the extinct dynasty supplied a successor to the Danish throne, in the person of Prince Christian, of the house of Schleswig-Holstein-Glücksburg (the father of the Princess of Wales). King Christian succeeded to the throne by virtue of the provisions in a treaty signed in London in 1852 by the Great Powers, and also in accordance with the Danish law of succession which was enacted in 1853. There was no rival claimant for the crown of Denmark, but another collateral branch of his house, that of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg has supplied a claimant for the separate sovereignty of the duchies in the person of the Duke of Augustenburg. The contingent rights of this personage had been previously bought off and paid for. The Treaty of London and the Danish law of succession did not recognize him, nor has he any standing in public law, yet it is by the prosecution of his claims to the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein that the long-existing imbroglio has been now brought to such a pass that the sword has been drawn to decide whether a duke of Augustenburg or a duke of Glücksburg

shall be the sovereign of these petty duchies. It is thus a conflicting claim of two rival, though related, families; and Europe and the world may well exclaim, "a plague of both your houses," if their ambition entails upon it once more the miseries of war.

The duchies being connected by some bond with the German Confederation of States, many of the German reigning princes hastened to recognize the claim of the Prince of Augustenburg, as by his obtaining the sovereignty of the duchies, the intention which the King of Denmark was suspected to entertain of absorbing them into his kingdom, would be defeated. The duke was accordingly proclaimed at Altona, on the 24th of December, as the sovereign of Schleswig-Holstein, the proclamation being made by Federal commissioners, and supported by Federal troops, to whom the Danish soldiers yielded the military occupation of the town, falling back on another position. The movement was in fact a revolution. The Holsteiners had made it, and successfully, and considered themselves competent to control it; but in this they have miscalculated. They designed to construct a ducal government, raise an army, and fancied themselves on the highway to establish, by force of arms, their duke's rights in Schleswig as speedily as they had in Holstein. They considered the matter as a national war between the duchies of Denmark, to decide upon whom the sovereignty of Schleswig-Holstein should devolve.

Whatever friends Denmark might be able to enlist in her cause, the duchies felt sure of the support of all Germany in a quarrel which involved, as they thought, universal German interests. But now the two great Powers of Prussia and Austria, making up between them much more than two-thirds of the might of Germany, take the affair into their own hands, and occupy the duchies with views antagonistic to Denmark, and no less at variance with those of the Federal Diet and of the generality of the German people. With Austria and Prussia there is no question either of nationality or of disputed succession. They are not unprepared to recognize the integrity of the Danish monarchy; nay, they are in a certain manner pledged to support it; only they think themselves entitled, and even obliged, to meddle with the internal affairs of the Danish Government, and demand the repeal of certain measures which the king, perhaps, deemed necessary to the safety and well-being of his State.

Austria and Prussia invade the duchies ostensibly with an intent to recall the King of Denmark to the terms of the London Treaty. But other Powers were parties to that treaty, and it is not said that these have commissioned the Austro-Prussians to act in

their name and with their consent. Austria and Prussia, moreover, acted in 1851-2 as representatives of the German Confederacy, and they are now pursuing a course not only not imposed upon them by the Confederacy, but in a bold and wanton opposition to its wishes. Those two Powers have, in point of fact, the whole world against them—Denmark, the Duchies, the German Diet and people, and the framers of the London Treaty.

It well becomes Prussia, indeed, to stand up for the people's rights, and it well becomes Austria to be a stickler for national constitutions and the non-incorporation of provinces. It is only a pity Denmark or some other stronger State does not turn the tables upon them and take up the cause of the oppressed nationalities groaning under their yoke. The very Schleswig-Holsteiners, those who are bitterest in their enmity to Denmark, aver that she is unfairly dealt with, and that Prussia and Austria have absolutely no other ground of action against her than the immense preponderance of their forces. However superior these may be, Denmark will make a stout resistance, and it is not at all certain that she will be left single-handed in the struggle.

Kiel, of which the Austro-Prussian troops took possession on the 24th January, is a strong and considerable town in the circle of Lower Saxony, and is the capital of the duchy or province of Holstein. It stands on a peninsula, in a bay of the Baltic; it possesses a commodious harbour for ships of the largest size; and also a castle and university. It is thirty-seven miles distant from Lubeck, and forty-six from Hamburg. The duchy of Holstein is formed by the German ocean on the west, the Baltic or the gulf of Lubeck on the east, the Duchy of Mecklenburg, on the south-east, by the river Elbe and Bremer on the south-west, and Lauenburg, with the territory of Hamburg on the south. Its greatest length is about eighty miles, and its breadth sixty.

The Duchy of Sleswig, or South Jutland, which Austria and Prussia have declared their resolve to seize in the same manner as they have Holstein, lies between Jutland and Holstein, touching on the Baltic and North Sea. It is about one hundred miles long, and sixty broad. It is generally level, and is marshy near the west coast. The coasts have many deep but shallow bays, and there are islands on both sides belonging to it. Agriculture and grazing are carried on with great success, its corn, cattle, and dairy produce being famous; it has also prosperous and extensive fisheries. Its chief town, of the same name, stands on the river Sley, near its entrance to the Baltic. It is a small place, with little trade.



[CLARA MANSFIELD OVERHEARS A CONFESSION.]

A YOUNG GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY.

By VANE IRETON ST. JOHN,

Author of "The Queen of Night," "In Spite of the World," &c

CHAPTER XLIX.

Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer cloud,
Without our special notice? *Shakespeare.*

SHE came at night closely veiled, and giving no name.

The waiters at the Railway Hotel, therefore, who had seen her a hundred times before, knew her not as Clara Mansfield.

Even a stranger, however, could have perceived, had he taken the trouble to observe her, that she was a prey to terrible agitation; for the few words she uttered were spoken in a voice which no strength of mind seemed capable of rendering firm, and she neither ate nor drank, before she retired, early, to her bed.

It was about ten in the morning that she left the hotel, and took her way towards the cottage of the woodcutter.

Yet the spring-time was coming on apace.

The snow and the frost had deserted the earth and left it free to vernal influences.

The birds sang not in the branches, and nature refused to smile.

Clara hurried on towards the cottage of Bob Smithers.

When near it she hesitated.

The door was closed, and everything was so gloomy around her that she feared to enter.

The day was dull, miserable, chilly.

A little rain had fallen in the morning, but now it had ceased, though the clouds hung heavy and low, and the mist-wreaths clung about the ravines and cliffs.

It was one of those days of unutterable gloom and sadness, when the earth lies like dead, and the heavy sky sweeps downwards like a pall: when the whole expression of nature is one of sorrow; when even crimes do not startle us so much as at brighter moments.

Clara passed the cottage and went towards the Springhead.

Deep in the sunless rift, where the wildest birds built no nest, and where no trace of life or vegetation was to be seen, with the grey crags striking sheer and sharp from the edge, as if torn asunder by some mighty throbb, the black pool lay like a lake of the

dead, or as the country people said, the mouth of the bottomless pit.

Stories and mournful legends lingered, as well they might, around this spot.

Murders in the olden times, accidents to straying feet, destruction to young lovers and laughing children: the suicide of love, despair, and guilt—all such sad memories hovered like restless ghosts over the dark pool.

Clara sat down near the edge, flinging stones into the water, still and unruined at the base, and seemingly watching the circles they made in the lakelet.

At length she rose, as if the sight of the Springhead had given her courage, and approached the cottage. This time she neared it from the side where the window was open to the spring breezes.

She heard voices.

Instinctively she crouched to listen, and crept close to the window.

There were two persons speaking, Marston Grey and Bob Smithers.

The old man was evidently in bed.

"Do you feel better now?" said Grey in a kind voice.

"Yes, thank'ee sir," returned the woodcutter, "but I don't know now whether I ought to tell."

"It is now the time!" returned Marston Grey; "delay may be dangerous. It is your duty to yourself and to others to tell the truth."

There was silence for a moment.

Then the woodcutter spoke again.

"If she knew it she would kill me!"

"She will not have the chance!" returned Marston Grey: "when she was last with me she hinted something which seemed like a threat against you; but I have this time been beforehand with her."

"But of what use will it be my telling you?" persisted Bob Smithers; "there's no one here as a witness."

"If what you saw is what I believe," said Marston, "I will see that there are witnesses to your next statement. Come, let us lose no time—we may be interrupted."

Again a silence.

"Well," began the old man; "I will tell you, though I break a vow in doing so. Hush! What sound is that?"

Marston listened.

"It is but the rain falling on the leaves," he said; "fear nothing."

He was right, yet wrong too.

The raindrops were pattering on the tender leaves of spring; and Clara still stood near the casement.

But the noise they heard was a convulsive start she gave when the old man consented to a confession—a start which made her tremulous form stagger against the trellice-work.

And so the old man told his story, which, denuded of extraneous expressions and interruptions, ran as follows:

"It was a dark night, as I said before, when I heard someone come by, singing a French song. I went to the door, and saw it was Mr. Desney.

"Good evening, Smithers," he said; "it's rather a dark night. Can you give me a light for my cigar?"

"Aye—aye sir," returned I, and he entered, lit his cigar by my candle, and went out again. He was in the best of spirits, and wished me a cheery good-night as he went away.

After he had gone, I bolted the door, put my candle in a niche, where I always stand it of a night, and went to the window to close it.

"When there, I thought I heard voices.

"It was very dark, and at first I could see nothing, but at length the moon broke from behind a cloud, and I saw Gabriel Desney standing by the rift, with a lady by his side.

"Who she was I could not tell at first, though I strained my eyes to see.

"I don't know what possessed me, but I suspected that something was wrong, and opening the cottage door stealthily, I crept out and passed towards the thicket."

"They were so engaged in conversation that they did not hear me."

"And do you remember what they said?" asked Marston Grey.

"Yes—yes," said the old man; "yes, indeed—I have thought over it many—many a time, and I remember all."

So he proceeded, and though the rain was now pouring in a steady shower, Clara Mansfield crept closer, and listened on:

The moon was full upon them, as the woodcutter stood in the shadow of the grove, and he then saw that the girl was Clara Mansfield.

"Desney!" she said, in a voice of suppressed passion; "you are pursuing a cowardly, dastardly course—you are seeking to ruin me!"

"No, Clara!" he said; "no—it is you who are persecuting me. You are determined that I shall not marry your sister, and will stoop to any crime to prevent it."

Clara muttered some suppressed words, which the woodcutter could not hear.

Then she added aloud:

"I have been in your room this night—I have seen the papers on your desk—the papers which are designed for my destruction. What have you to say to that?"

"Desney smiled.

"Nothing!" he said, "except that I was about to burn them, that they might not bear witness against you!"

Clara laughed bitterly.

"And do you suppose that I believe that?" she said.

"You may not believe me," he answered; "but, nevertheless, it is the truth. I am even now going home to destroy them."

"It is already done!" she said, in a low, mocking voice.

"What mean you?" asked Desney.

"I destroyed them all," said Clara, in a low, muttering tone, as if she were preparing herself for something.

"Well," cried Desney, after a moment, "let us hasten home now. This is scarcely a pleasant place for a meeting. Let us understand one another. Your secret is safe, let mine be so also."

Her strength had now come back to her.

"No!" she said; "you must not return to Ellersby."

He started.

"Not return!" he cried.

"I have said it. You must not return!" repeated Clara.

He laughed scornfully.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Do you suppose I am going to give up all my future because you bid me to do so? Do you suppose I am disposed to leave one I love at the command of a woman who has disgraced me? No, Clara, you ask too much. I have promised to hide your secret which is your shame—let that suffice; but do not ask me to remain here to listen to your folly."

What had passed over the scene?

The leaden sky hung low and black as before.

The wild birds shrieked as they flew across the vale, as they had shrieked ten minutes ago.

On the crags a few stones were dislodged, as if by a spurning foot, and on the black pool rushed broad ripples.

Clara Mansfield stood on the edge of the ravine alone.

"She did not seem to be able to remain there long," continued the old man, "but turned wildly away."

"I stepped out from the thicket as she did so."

"She started."

"You here!" she cried; "have you been here long?"

"I have," I answered, "I have seen all!"

"She looked at me a moment as if she could have killed me too."

"Then she grasped my hand in hers, as if she would have crushed it in her tiny fingers."

"He fell over!" she said, in a hoarse whisper.

"No!" I answered, firmly, "you have killed him!"

"She half-shrieked out her next words."

"You are mad, old man!" she cried; "you are mad. Let us return to your cottage."

"I made her walk before me, for on that night I feared the fragile girl."

"When we were in here, she took a heavy purse from her pocket."

"Take this," she said, "and depend upon me for as much more as you want. A foolish accusation such as that you made a moment ago would be my ruin. Remember, you are wrong; your alarm has turned your brain. I did not push him over—he stepped back to avoid me and fell. Be wise, then, and keep silence."

"She spoke wildly and hurriedly, and her eyes glared at me as if her last words were a threat."

"I was poor, Mr. Grey, and the money which she offered me was a great temptation."

"Surely, I thought, it can be no crime to keep my own counsel."

"I would do as you bid me," I said, "but as it is an accident, why not give the alarm and procure assistance?"

"No, no!" cried Miss Mansfield; "my presence here would excite suspicion. All that could be done would be of no avail to him. No human being could fall from that height and be saved."

She moved towards the door and passed out into the night.

Once outside, she stood in the moonlight, and turned upon me again, with a dull glare in her eyes.

"Remember," she said, "you must keep silence."

"I knew then she was threatening me."

"I will," I said.

"My heart smote me, nevertheless, as I spoke, and I felt that I was promising what I had no right to promise."

"She said no more, but gathering her shawl round

her, walked away quickly towards the Grange, never once glancing towards the spot where he lay.

"I hurried in and went straight to bed."

"But I could not sleep."

"All that night I thought of nothing else but the awful thing I had seen; and in the morning I trembled at every footstep that passed my cottage."

"And when Mr. Neville came to question me, I knew beforehand what he would find in the Springhead, for all through the darkness his face had haunted me."

"I could see it, as it lay still and blood-stained in the pool. I could hear again the sharp cry of terror he gave as she pushed him over the brink. I could feel the weight of the body I should have to carry."

"Yet until now I have never betrayed her, and should not have done so had not the hand of death been upon me."

Even now he seemed anxious to excuse himself for his confession.

"You have done your duty," said Marston Grey, rising. "I will leave you now awhile. In an hour I will again be with you, and you will merely have to make a short deposition of the facts. Do not try to move, but remain quiet, and be easy in your mind. Who knows but you may yet recover?"

Clara knew that he was moving towards the door, and crept round, therefore, to the opposite side of the cottage, where a mass of shrubbery alone divided it from the brink of the terrible precipice.

Here she was safe.

Marston Grey walked rapidly towards the town of Lorneby, and never once looked behind him.

"Now," said Clara, as she approached the door, "now I must be brave and self-possessed."

The next moment she had lifted the latch, and stood before the eyes of the astonished and terrified wood-cutter.

CHAPTER I.

Rosalia.—I said thee once my vengeance was unerring—
Why, then, dost dare me this?

Poissant.—The hand of death
Lies heavy on me, and my soul demands
A free confession. *Old May.*

CLARA did not appear to observe the evident alarm of the old man; but, closing the door behind her, walked to his bedside, saying:

"I hope you are better."

The calmness of her voice was so opposed to the pallor of her face and the steady glare of her eyes that the woodcutter felt terrified.

He felt certain that she was suppressing some strong emotion.

"I am better," he said; "but you are not looking well, Miss Mansfield."

He scarcely knew what he said, and certainly did not stop to reason, or he would have asked himself a simple question—"How did she know that he had been ill, that she asked if he were better?"

Clara smiled.

A very ghastly smile it was.

"I have had a restless night," she said; "that may account for my looking somewhat ill. I have brought you some wine. They told me up at Lorneby you were ill."

As she spoke she drew from beneath her mantle a bottle of port wine and placed it on the table near.

"I thought you might have no corkscrew," she added with a smile, "so I had the cork drawn."

"Thank you!" said the old man feebly.

He was afraid of her.

In spite of himself he felt convinced that she had come for no good.

There was silence for a moment.

Clara knew there was no time to be lost.

She rose, went to the cupboard, brought out a glass, and poured out some wine.

"Here," she said, "drink this—it will do you good."

He took the glass, gazing at her meanwhile with a wistful expression, as if begging her not to take advantage of his weakness to destroy him.

But he drank the wine, merely saying quickly:

"I hope it will do me good, Miss Mansfield, though I fear it will not. I am fast dying, and there's very little that would help or harm me."

The old Dutch clock in the corner groaned the hour of noon.

At half-past twelve, Marston Grey would be there.

"Have you seen the doctor?" she asked.

"No."

"Ah! had you seen one he would not have let you talk of dying. All you require is strength; drink some more of the wine—it will restore you."

The first glass he had taken, had certainly had the effect of raising his spirits and thickening that, perhaps, after all, his suspicions might be unjust, he assented.

"Just one more, miss, thank ye," he said smiling.

She gave it him.

In a few minutes he complained of feeling sleepy.

Then Clara sat down by the bedside and spoke to him.

"Old man," she said, "you have betrayed me in spite of all."

His drowsiness for a moment left him.

A deadly pallor overspread his features.

"Betrayed you!" he murmured; "who has told you that?"

She smiled bitterly.

"Look at me," she said, "am I not drenched with rain? Out there by the window, I have stood this morning, listening to your words—listening to the story you have told to Marston Grey—listening to your betrayal of me. Did I not warn you? Did I not, plainly as I could, give you to understand what would be the result of your falseness? You forgot to tell him one thing, and that thing, the most material of all. You forgot to tell him what I said to you when I came to you after the inquest. Do you not remember?"

The old man was trembling, and cold sweat was on his brow.

"No," he murmured faintly, "I remember nothing."

"I will remind you, then," she answered. "I said to you, 'Be assured, Mr. Smithers, it will be best to keep friends with me, for to betray me is to die.'"

He put out his thin hand and grasped her rounded arm.

"Why do you tell me this?" he asked.

"I but remind you of the inevitable result of your base deceit. You have betrayed me, you must die."

He looked at her steadfastly.

"I ought to have known," he said, "I ought to have known, when I promised to keep your secret, that dark days would come which would prevent my preserving my promise. They have come; death is hovering over me, and with the grave opening before me, I could hear the lie no longer on my heart. Mr. Grey has told me this day that you intend marrying again, and has made me thoroughly aware how great a crime I have been committing in not confessing all. I have confessed now, to save myself from the deepest remorse, to enable me to die in peace, that I may know in my last moments that no one is suffering from my fear."

"It is well that you are firmly convinced that you are doing right," said Clara, "it will smooth the path before you."

The old man replied not.

His eyes were fast closing.

Clara glanced at the clock.

It was twenty minutes past twelve.

In ten minutes Marston Grey would return with the doctor.

"Is this death?" he asked.

She did not hear him, for his voice was almost inaudible.

"Is this death, Miss Clara?" he asked again.

She rose.

"It is not death," she answered, "but a sleep before death, from which you will never wake."

Whether he heard her or not, it is difficult to say, for his eyelids were closed heavily, and his breathing was thick and rapid.

Clara Mansfield took the bottle of wine and opening the door, went out, closing it carefully behind her.

Then she approached the edge of the ravine, and threw the poisoned wine into the Springhead.

"There is the last evidence of my guilt," she said as she turned away.

She looked towards Lorneby.

Two figures were coming hastily along the bridle-path.

She darted in among the low trees, and was lost to view, but in the moment that she occupied in crossing the clearing Marston Grey had seen her.

He could not distinguish who it was, but he perceived that it was a woman, and guessed her identity.

Suspecting something wrong, he rushed forward, and searched everywhere—ransacked every nook and corner near the cottage, but nothing was to be seen.

Then he returned—met the doctor at the door of the cottage, and both entered together.

Meanwhile Clara hurried away towards the Grange, where her mother and her sister had arrived a week beforehand.

Louisa was walking in the grounds when she came in.

"Why Clara what ails you?" she said, her sisterly love and sympathy overcoming the remembrance of the crime.

"Nothing," replied that amiable young lady hurriedly.

"Nay, but you look pale and agitated," cried Louisa, "let me go in with you, and get you something."

"Thank you, no," returned Clara, "all I desire is to be left alone. I have had great misfortunes, and can't be expected to look well. I am not like you, I can't so easily forget grief."

"What do you mean, Clara?"

Clara laughed bitterly.

"Shall I tell you?"

"I have asked you?"

"I had better not. I will only say that Marston Grey will be here shortly."

Louisa started.

"He has been here two days—did you not know?"

Clara turned pale.

"Know it," she said, petulantly tapping her feet on the doorstep they had just reached, "how should I know it? I have but just come from Thornton, as you are aware?"

"You have come alone?"

Clara eyed her sister curiously.

Could she trust her?

Could she ask her to keep for her a secret, when she was aware that Louisa knew all?

"Louisa," she said, taking her sister's hand in hers, "Louisa, I cannot believe you want to destroy me."

The tears started to Louisa's eyes.

"Oh! Clara," she cried, "you cannot believe that. Indeed—indeed, I cannot even think you guilty, and if you are so, I am the last whom you should accuse of cruelty or unkindness. Tell me you are innocent of the crime they charge you with."

"Louisa," exclaimed Clara, in her old petulant way again, "there's no time for crying now. What I want you to do, is something easy enough, in all conscience, but the lack of it will do me immeasurable harm."

"Tell me—what is it?"

"Marston Grey will be here soon; he must not know when I arrived home."

"I cannot tell him—I do not know the time."

"Let him suppose it early morning, then—soon after he started. See, here he comes, and the doctor is with him. Remember my words; if he knows I have but just arrived, it will be my destruction."

With this she swept hastily into the house, leaving her sister in a state of bewilderment and alarm.

She dreaded the approach of her lover, for that such he was she could no longer conceal from herself.

When he did come, and her eyes fell upon his face, she was terrified by the change which a few hours had made in him.

He was pale as death—his eyes were sunken in his head—his ashen lips trembled with some unwonted emotion.

"Louisa," he said, hurriedly, "was that Clara who just left you?"

"Yes, Mr. Grey."

"How long has she been at the Grange?"

"Since early this morning," she said, tremulously, with her eyes fixed on the ground. "She came home just after you left."

"She has been out, then, since," he answered, somewhat surprised.

"No, no," cried Louisa, "she has been with us all the time."

Marston's eyes gazed for a moment in anger at the young girl.

Then their expression softened to one of pity.

"They are sisters, after all," he thought.

"Louisa," he said, kindly, "you are for once not telling me the truth. Clara has but just returned. I forgive you, because you have acted with a good intention. But go up, if you please, and ask her to see me in the drawing-room, for I have an important communication to make to her."

Louisa said no more, but went up-stairs quietly, while he entered the drawing-room.

In a few moments Louisa returned.

"My sister is dressing," she said, "but will be here presently."

Marston did not answer, but walked to the window, and looked out.

Louisa sat down, and, taking up a book, opened it listlessly.

Her eyes were not directed towards its pages.

Her mind was occupied with other ideas.

She felt that a crisis in her fate had arrived.

CHAPTER LI

The ties of kin are strong: and though she feared

And hated her, even as her deadliest foe,

She still had pity left.

Jona.

For a few moments there was silence in the room.

Then Marston Grey left his post of observation at the window, where he had seen nothing, in truth, but the images in his own mind—and, coming to where Louisa sat, took a chair by her side.

The girl's glossy curls drooped over a marble forehead, and her bosom heaved violently with an emotion she could not conceal.

"Louisa," he said, in a low, gentle voice, "I have

something to say to you, to which I beg you will give your most earnest attention, since it will affect all my life, and the future, in some degree, of your sister."

The young girl's heart leaped up in her bosom, and the red blood began to mount to her cheeks.

"I am listening," she murmured.

"Some time since," pursued Marston Grey, taking her hand, which was not withdrawn; "some time since a great misfortune happened to you. You lost, through your sister, one upon whom your love was bestowed."

He paused.

She sighed deeply.

But beyond this she made no sign.

Marston continued:

"I have perhaps chosen an odd time—a bad time, it may be, to tell you my heart's wish. I can explain this readily. Your sister Clara, who hates me because I have been so determined in discovering the author of Gabriel Desney's death, has told me to my face that she will use all her influence with you to lower me in your eyes. Therefore I speak ere she has time to effect her purpose. I love you, Louisa, sincerely, deeply, and my dearest wish is that you will become my wife. Say, may I hope?"

The girl's face flushed crimson.

Tears in abundance coursed down her blushing cheeks.

"Oh, Mr. Grey!" she murmured, "I know not what to say to you. It is so soon since my misfortune that I scarcely know my own feelings, or whether the sentiments I entertain towards you are those which you would be willing to accept as love."

Her words were calm and studied enough, as it seemed; but they did not express the fulness of her heart.

Though she had lost Gabriel Desney when her young heart was bound up in him, she had since learned to regard his conduct calmly as that of one who would scarcely have made for her a fit companion, and in Marston Grey she seemed to recognize one vastly his superior.

Until this moment, however, she had admired him from afar.

Never for one moment did she imagine that he would ask her for her love.

All his tenderness—his gentle attentions, she had accepted as those of a brother or of a friend who felt acutely for her in her painful position.

Her heart was full to overflowing—what was she to do? Was she to refuse the love of this man—good and noble as she felt him to be—because he had been compelled prematurely to declare it?

"Then you do love me, Louisa," he said in a voice soft and low which went to her very heart, "tell me, dear one, that I may hope—tell me you will be mine."

His arm had stolen round her waist, and there it lingered while the answer came.

"If you are willing to accept the love of one who has mourned for the loss of another, I freely give it."

He pressed her to his heart, and looked fondly, proudly down upon her.

And yet in their hearts there was no unalloyed happiness.

There was something which stepped between them—something which haunted them—something which menaced them.

This Something was the remembrance of Clara's crime!

Louisa nestled closer to Marston's breast at length, and said:

"Dear Marston, in the joy which your love has brought to my heart I cannot, must not, forget one thing."

"What is that?"

"My sister's misery—her danger."

Marston smiled sadly.

"She is your sister, Louisa," he said. "From me no danger threatens her. There is now no shadow of a doubt remaining as to her guilt. All I ask is that she will leave the country—that she will seek no longer to mix with the members of her family, and cease the endeavour to entangle other men—my friends—in her web of deceit and crime. Heaven forgive me if I am too lenient, as I fear I am. With evidence which would condemn her to death, I ask from her but a voluntary exile."

Louisa gazed at him gratefully.

"Thank you, dear Marston," she said; "that is what I would myself have demanded. Her presence near me is a terror—a living bitterness. She recalls to me sad memories, and makes me loathe her for her crime. Send her away, then, Marston, but punish her no more."

They were so intently talking—so earnestly wrapped in thoughts of one another, that they heard not the step which approached them.

It came slowly, stealthily along, gliding up close to them without being noticed.

Then a voice spoke:

"You vary your occupation, Marston Grey. An hour ago you were on the scent of blood, now I find you deep in a love affair."

They both started.

Marston, because he was surprised that she should thus convict herself—Louisa, because, even before this unworthy woman, she felt ashamed at being discovered in such a position.

"Louisa," said Marston, tenderly, "leave me alone with your sister a few moments."

Louisa rose without replying.

"She will not be loth to leave you," exclaimed Clara scornfully, and with a bitter tone of satire. "She will have occupation enough in her own thoughts—in congratulating herself upon obtaining a second lover so soon after she has buried the first."

"The first, murdered by your hands!"

The words flew unbidden to Louisa's lips.

It seemed as if some inner voice spoke.

As if some spirit had compelled her lips to frame the syllables.

Louisa, when she had spoken, left the room, weeping; and Clara, pale and aghast, sank into a chair.

Her astonishment and discomfiture was complete.

She had never, for one moment, dreamed that Louisa believed her guilty, and certainly would never have imagined that such words could leave her gentle sister's lips.

Marston Grey spoke to her sternly.

"Your taunt, madam," he said, "was ill-timed. It required a strong incentive to induce your sister to give you such an answer as that. You persuaded her but a short time since to tell me an untruth, in order to make me believe that you had been here all the day. Why, then, seek to rouse her anger by insults, and make her else your enemy?"

"She has betrayed me, then?"

"No; she has told me nothing. She has not said that you were at the cottage of the old woodcutter this morning. I needed not to be informed of that, because both I and Dr. Denby saw you there."

"It is false," gasped Clara.

"No—it is not false—you have left the evidences of your presence behind you. Bob Smithers is dead."

A gleam of triumph shot from the eyes of the wretched woman.

"Dead," she thought, "then my secret is safe."

"What then? If he be dead—you cannot say I killed him. I heard he was ill. Old age, I suppose, has killed him."

Marston Grey eyed her wonderingly.

She kept up her character well.

"Miss Mansfield," he said, "it is useless waste of time for us to discuss the subject, unless we understand each other thoroughly. I arrived at Smithers' cottage a quarter of an hour before he died."

"Well?"

"He was speechless, but Dr. Denby roused him sufficiently to write three lines. Here is a copy. You may suppose that I decline to trust the original with you."

Clara took the paper silently, and read it through.

A haze seemed to come over her eyes, and she reeled as if she would have fallen from her chair.

The three lines were as follows:

"I swear, on my dying bed, I saw Clara Mansfield throw Gabriel Desney into the Springhead, and she has poisoned me for making the confession."

(Signed) ROBERT SMITHERS.

"Witnesses. MARSTON GREY.

"DR. DENBY."

It said little—gave no dates, and explained nothing—but it was enough to destroy her for ever.

It was written in a straggling, trembling hand, which was nevertheless recognizable as that of the old woodcutter; and it was witnessed by one man at least who had no interest in the matter.

"You have done well," said Clara, at length, in a thick, husky voice; "you have achieved a noble victory. You, a strong man, have crushed me, a weak woman. What now? What are the next orders of my master?"

"Miss Mansfield!" answered Marston; "I am neither your master nor your judge. I have simply looked after the interests of my dead friend, my living friends, and your family. What I conceive now to be just you must consent to, or I deliver this paper into the hands of the officers of justice."

"And what is it you demand?"

"That you leave England at once—never to return."

For a moment passion urged Clara to make an angry answer.

Then her subtle nature reassumed its sway.

"And is that all you ask?"

"Yes—all."

"You do not name any particular spot for my exile?"

"None."

"I accept your terms!" she said, as she rose from her chair; "but when am I to quit the country?"

"At once."

"And are you aware, Mr. Grey, that I have no money—have you, among your careful calculations, remembered that it is necessary to supply me with funds. My private income is but small."

"That shall be arranged; you will require a week, I presume, to make your preparations."

"I shall; are you going to remain here?"

"I am for a few days."

Clara smiled bitterly.

"A pleasant time for you," she said, as she left the room; "you have all the sunshine of life before you, and can, therefore, easily forget that you have left me in the darkness."

The day passed quietly.

Clara remained in her room all day.

In the evening, Louisa went up into her own chamber, and from a feeling of pity, as well as curiosity, or rather a desire to ascertain what she could have been doing so long alone, she knocked at her door.

There was no answer.

She knocked again.

"Who is there?" asked a muffled voice.

"I—Louisa."

"I do not wish to see you. Go away!"

So the younger sister crept away to her room to weep.

What had the other been doing?

As soon as the shades of evening had fallen over the scene, she had entered her brother's room and taken from it a suit of clothes.

In these she dressed herself, destroying every vestige of the dress in which she had come.

Her bright curly locks she had cut short, and arranged them coquettishly under the hat.

She looked little like a man—more like a handsome youth.

When all the house was still, she left her room, went down the stairs, into the grounds, and out into the highway.

On the crest of the hill she turned and looked at the house.

Then she turned away, walking towards Lorneby, and the place that had known her knew her no more for ever.

On the following morning a young man presented himself at Coutts' Bank, and drew out four thousand pounds, which had stood in the name of Clara Mansfield.

That evening Marston Grey received the following letter:

"MON CHER MARSTON,—With all your skill in reading human nature, you have failed to read me. I have gone—whither you cannot guess, and will never know. Suffice it for you to remember these words: that I live but for revenge, and that, in every bright moment, I will be the cloud upon your sun."

"CLARA MANSFIELD."

It was on the evening that Clara left Ellersby Grange, that Ralph Conyers, passing through Thornton, saw entering the prison, between four constables, a pale, haggard woman, dressed in black, whom he recognized as his mother.

(To be continued.)

A NIGHT MARAUDER.

BY COLONEL W. DUNLAP.

It was nearly noon when Harry and I returned from the eastern end of the valley, and after dinner I went to my bunk and lay down. My head ached, and I felt weak—too weak to join our party in an excursion to the forest. Harry asked me if I would like company. I told him no, I preferred to be alone. If he wished to go with Ben and Abner I hoped he would do so; only I would have him leave a good watch with the waggon. He went away, and I went to sleep. I slept soundly, for both my mental and physical energies had been sorely tried, and they needed that recuperation that only sleep can afford.

I had slept, how long I could not then determine, when I was visited by a curious dream. I thought we were upon one of the great prairies of the Western world, and that Harry Rusk and I had command of an outpost, with a battalion of two hundred men. We had been sent out to hold a pass against the Indians. By a transition which every dreamer has experienced, we were removed from the pass to the very centre of the prairie, where the eye could see nothing but one vast sea of waving grass, bounded by the far-off horizon. Harry and I came from our tents and gazed in wonder and alarm. Why were we in that place when we should be holding a pass miles away?

Suddenly, while we were talking, we heard a yell that seemed to split the heavens, and upon looking up

we saw thousands upon thousands of Indians lifting their horribly painted faces above the tall grass. One more whoop, and I awoke. A confused din sounded in my ears, and I heard voices in angry discussion. I recognized the voice of Anam; and I next heard the tones of old Gash. Then came a mingling of discordant sounds, as though a hundred monkeys were holding a pow-wow. By this time my senses were aroused to clear action, and I began to imagine what the difficulty was. I listened awhile longer, and was convinced. The old patriarch, who had seemed so honest and kind, was as big a thief as any of his people; and thinking, no doubt, that the white men were all absent, he had led a company of his warriors to our waggon for the purpose of plunder. A little more listening convinced me, also, that my own men thought I was away with my companions.

Without stopping to put on my jacket, I slipped my pistols into my belt, and, taking my double-barrelled rifle, I leaped from my waggon. The first scene that presented itself to my view was Anam, at the head of about fifty of his men, all armed with heavy clubs—they had brought neither bows nor spears. They were close by the outer waggon, and were flourishing their weapons as though they meant mischief. They, as I stood, were upon my right hand. Upon my left I saw old Gash brandishing a harpoon; and with him were Bolus, Tambet, and Zebul—the others being all away. My weakness was gone, and my head was as clear as ever; and, as I faced those black rascals, with my faithful rifle in my hands, I felt no more fear than I would have felt before a flock of goats. When Anam saw me he drew back as he might have drawn back from a lion.

In as severe a tone as I could assume I asked him what he wanted. His companions lowered their clubs and he continued to fall back. I raised my rifle and ordered him to stop. I had command of words enough to make myself distinctly understood; and he understood me; for he not only stopped, but he raised his hand as though he would have me lower the muzzle of my piece. He knew well its deadly power. But I did not lower it. I turned to Zebul, who spoke the Kaffir tongue, and asked him what had been going on. His answer was in a few words, and to the point. He said the chief had come up to rob our waggon.

"But," said I, "how did he expect to escape punishment when we returned?"

"He told us that he had a hundred warriors, who could throw the spear and shoot the arrow, and that he would give you battle, and kill you all, if you dared to attack him."

Situated as I then was, I deemed it best to allow the wretch to depart in peace, if he was willing so to do; so I instructed Zebul to tell him that my eye was upon him, and that a leaden bullet would pass through his heart in just one minute if he did not take himself off out of my way. The message was communicated as I had given it, and the sable patriarch lost no time in getting back to his village. His companions pushed and crowded each other in a wild manner, each seeming to fear that the threatened bullet might yet find the man who should be unfortunate enough to be caught in the rear.

After they had gone I asked Zebul and Gash for more particulars; but all they could tell me was, that Anam had come up with his followers, and demanded to search our waggon. They had not dared to offer physical resistance, but they had refused his demand, and it must have been while the demand was being pressed a second time that I awoke. The savages had unmistakably declared that they meant to rob the waggon, and Zebul repeated his declaration that Anam had boasted of the ability of his hundred warriors to annihilate us.

After all the explanation I could get from my men I was puzzled to understand how Anam had dared to undertake such a thing. It appeared to me that he must have known that he could not cope with us in battle. Our bullets would have picked off him and his leaders before they could have made an attack. However, I was determined, if possible, to solve the mystery before I had done with it.

Our hunting party returned before dark, and when I had told them what had happened, they were for administering summary punishment; but I advised them to keep quiet. That night Jot and Tickom and Booboo, acting under my directions, secured and brought in one of the Boja warriors to our camp. At first he was frightened, and begged for mercy; but when I had made him understand that no harm should come to him if he would answer me a few questions, he not only became quiet, but signified his willingness to answer anything I asked.

I first asked him, through one of our Kaffirs, if his chief had not intended to rob our waggon. He hesitated until I had given him further assurance of safety, and then he confessed that such was the fact.

"Anam supposed that all the white men were away?"

"Yes."

"But did he not fear that he would be punished on our return?"

"No; for he meant to steal all your powder and bullets, and all the guns you had left behind; and he did not think you would bring ammunition enough from the forest with you to do him much harm."

Here was the whole secret. The old rascal had hoped to disarm us. He certainly had more recklessness than caution, and more daring than shrewdness. I dismissed the villager, and then we held a consultation, the result of which was a decision that we should meet Anam on the next morning as though nothing had happened, and that we would purchase oxen of him if we could. He had as yet done us no harm, and we thought it useless to seek any revenge upon the ignorant old rascal.

Accordingly, on the following morning we repaired well armed to the village, making our way directly towards the chieftain's hut. He saw us coming, and quickly gathered a lot of his men, armed with bows and arrows. I smiled as I drew near, and asked him if he thought we meant to harm him. He replied that he did not know what might dwell in the heart of the white hunters. I soon convinced him that our visit was a friendly one; and as I made no allusion to the events of the previous day, he probably thought he had succeeded in making me believe that he had never had any evil designs upon our property.

And when I told him that we had come to buy oxen, he became easy and complaisant.

We visited one of his herds, and Jot and Sunam, who had the quickest and surest eyes for the various points of that sort of property, were not long in selecting ten animals that would answer our purpose. Such oxen would cost me at the Cape three pounds each. Now how should Anam and I trade? He was very anxious to obtain some powder; but I had none to spare. He then wanted some of my ivory; but when we came to the amount, I found that he valued it at a great deal less than I did. Finally we reached a satisfactory arrangement. I took the ten oxen, giving him in return ostrich feathers, beads, and common cloth, worth about six pounds, throwing in a common cocoa-handled sheath-knife. He had stuck until I brought out the sheath-knife; but that turned him. Once or twice the old rat approached the subject of the visit of the previous day, as though he was anxious to explain away all doubts or fears that might still be lingering in my mind; but I put him off with a light word. The third time he approached the subject was after we had concluded our trade; and I then told him that he need be under no apprehensions.

"I know," said I—one of my Kaffirs taking my words to his understanding—"that you could have meant us no harm. I know that you would not have ventured to incur the wrath of the white hunter."

The sable chieftain shrugged his shoulders, and said—"Ugh-r-r-r!" And as he turned away, he shook his head, as though he would have added that I didn't know all.

We returned to the camp with our oxen, where the drivers soon had them in yoke, and behaving as well as we could wish. It was now ten o'clock, and we concluded that we would take dinner on the march; so we speedily gathered up and packed our traps, and put the oxen to the track-ropes.

But where was Abner? He had not been visible for some time. And where were Artoly and Zebul? Just as we were ready to start, we saw them coming up the slope, driving four splendid oxen before them. What in the world had Otter Brook been doing?

"I've brought four more oxen," said Abner, as he turned the animals over to the drivers. "I thought we might need them. Oxen are apt to get knocked out of use, you know."

"But what did you pay for them?"

"Not much. I gave the old rascal a double-barrelled rifle and a pound of powder for 'em. I told him I had no bullets to spare, but he could easily make some. I fired off a charge of powder for him, and he thought the thing worked beautiful."

So Abner had put off the weapon which the gorilla had spoiled for him; and he had made something by keeping it, after all. Under other circumstances, I might have objected to such a trade on the part of one of our party; but I considered the worthless rifle good enough for Anam; and I was, furthermore, well-pleased with the accession thus made to our team.

As soon as the new oxen had been secured, we started on our march—not forward towards the Zambesi, but back over the road by which we had come. Our faces were turned to the southward, and we meant to make the best of our way back to the Cape. Just as we were leaving the valley, we heard a dull report in the direction of the village, which called a smile to the face of Otter Brook, for he knew that the chieftain of Boja was trying his rifle.

That night we tracked some ten miles by moonlight, pulling up at length in a beautiful vale, where there was a fountain of good water.

We got to bed about eleven o'clock, and I was sleeping away the night as soundly as could be, when I was aroused by the loud and angry barking of our dogs; and as I sat up in my bunk I discovered that the horses were as uneasy as were the dogs. I caught my rifle and hurried out, Harry and Abner quickly joining me.

The dogs were still barking, but as they were secretly leashed we could not at once determine in what direction to look for the trouble.

The moon was shining brightly, and objects were distinct at some distance. We were looking in all directions, expecting every moment to hear some crashing in the neighbouring bushes, when my boy Dan gave a sudden shout, and called my attention to something beneath the outer waggon. I looked, and plainly saw a large animal crouching down there.

At first I thought it must be one of the dogs which had broken his leash; but a closer inspection revealed to me a pair of eyes, emitting a flame of greenish colour, which I knew belonged to no canine head. I called to Harry, and told him to take aim and fire with me. My aim was a good one—about as fair as I could have taken by daylight—and as the report of our pieces broke upon the air, the animal made one spring, and fell dead within two rods of the waggon.

We hurried to the spot and found it to be a panther of the largest size. The fellow had certainly been bold; and we came to the conclusion that he could have known but very little of the habits of the white hunter. As we were dragging the carcass towards the servants' quarters, Ben Gilroy made his appearance, rifle in hand.

"Hallo! What's up?" he asked.

We showed him the dead panther.

"Good gracious! Why in thunder didn't ye call me?"

THE TUSCAN SISTERS.

In the south-east section of Tuscany, in a small hamlet among the mountains of Sienna, lived a poor goatherd named Antonio Mazzani. He had two children, both girls, named Lucetta and Silvia—the former having seen her eighteenth birthday, while the latter was two years younger. The season had been a disastrous one for Mazzani. A fatal disease had made fearful ravages among his flocks; the small patch of oranges and figs, and the little vineyard, had been subject to a killing blight; and when the autumn closed, he found himself not only without sufficient sustenance for the winter, but deeply involved in debt, for the amount of which he had several months previously pledged his cottage, his pastures and his tillage. Mazzani's creditor was the Count Niccolotto del Brin, a middle-aged man, of a most decidedly repulsive appearance, and who had, moreover, the reputation of being a hard-hearted, wicked man.

It was early afternoon. Mazzani, over whose bronzed features the lines of trouble were vividly drawn, sat within his humble dwelling, and near him sat the Count del Brin.

"Count," said the old man, with an expression that showed how much pain he suffered from the statement he had to make, "it is utterly impossible that I should pay you this debt at present. My flocks have been thinned, and my crops have failed me. You surely can wait another season?"

"You trespass too much upon my kindness, Mazzani."

"It is not me that trespasses, sir count; a power higher than mine has brought this about."

"But that is no reason that I should be the loser. Our bargain had no such provisions. I rented you land and sold you flocks, and you were either to pay me in money, or by giving up to me this estate. It's all simple—isn't it?"

"The contract is surely simple," returned Mazzani, in faltering accents.

"And so is the settlement," laconically added Count del Brin.

"The thing resolves itself into this," said the old man, with a strong effort at calmness; "you must either wait till the next season, or I must be cast out from my home, and myself and my children made beggars."

"I cannot wait."

"Then I must be homeless."

"No. It can be settled in another manner."

"Ha!" uttered Mazzani, while a beam of hope shot athwart his countenance.

"Yes," continued the count, in a low, half-whispering tone. "You remember a circumstance to which I have before alluded."

The old man gazed inquisitively into the face of his interlocutor, but he did not speak, for he seemed afraid so to do.

"I once asked you for the hand of your daughter Lucetta," continued Count del Brin.

"And I refused it," said Mazzani, in a tone more calm and firm than he had before exhibited.

"Yes; but now the case is different. Give me her hand now, and I will not only wait your own time for the payment of the debt, but I will release you from one-half of the amount."

"And would you make my child honourably your wife?"

"Yes. She is fair."

"But you are a count, and she a poor goatherd's daughter."

"Never mind that. Her beauty turns the scale in her favour."

"I will call my daughter, sir count."

"If you please."

The old man went to the door, and called his daughter's name. She soon entered, but when she saw the count, she stopped, and a sudden pallor overspread her features.

"Lucetta," said her father, "the Count del Brin has asked of me your hand in marriage. He promises to make you honourably his wife. Could you ever consent?"

She was a beautiful girl to whom this question was put—fair and faultless in form and feature, and possessed of the expression that marks the true and artless maiden. She started with a shudder, and gazed into her father's face. There was something in the strange, calm tone of the old man—something in the firm-set expression of his face, that struck terror to the poor girl's heart, and held her tongue in silence.

"My child," continued Mazzani, "could you ever be happy as his wife?"

"No, no; I should be wretched, miserable!"

And as she thus murmured, she buried her face in her parent's bosom.

Mazzani gently raised her head, and placing his hand upon her brow, he looked for a moment into her pain-dimmed eyes. The whole expression of his features changed as if by magic, and then turning to the count he said:

"Sir count, you have your answer."

"Do you refuse me her hand?" asked Niccolotto del Brin, his face turning darker with rage and chagrin.

"You hear what she has said."

"Then you refuse me?"

"Yes."

"And you will be turned out from your home!"

"Niccolotto del Brin," returned the old man, with his hand still upon Lucetta's head, "my house, my lands and my flocks I am not responsible for. If blight and disease fall upon them, they must go, and somewhere upon the earth I may find a new home; but God gave me my children that I might make them happy. I have no right to make them miserable, nor does the wish dwell in my heart. This sweet flower, once withered 'neath the blight of lasting misery, can never be restored to me. You may take all else of mine, but you cannot have my child."

"Then you must give up this place to me," said the count, rising from his seat, and gazing angrily upon his debtor. "You have had your choice, and you must now abide the consequences."

"Oh, sir!" cried Lucetta, starting from her father's side, and raising her hands towards the count, "let us have time to think of this. I can never love you, for you know that my heart is already given to another; but yet I cannot see my poor old father cast homeless upon the world."

"The decision may yet rest with you," returned Count del Brin, a beam of sensual hope springing to his face.

"Only give me time," continued Lucetta. "Let me see Francisco—"

"Hush, my child!" interrupted her father, while a bright tear glistened in either eye. "I am now an old man, and I believe I never wronged a human being, and now, now, I cannot commence by so deeply wronging my own child. No, no; the sacrifice shall not be made."

"But you, father! I should do wrong to see you turned a beggar upon the cold world—you who gave me life, and have supported me through helpless childhood."

"Lucetta, God has stricken my flocks, but he has not called upon me to bend you beneath a heavier yoke. From honest poverty we may rise again; but from the yoke this man would place upon you, you could never be redeemed. No! my mind is made up. We will yet remain together."

"You have chosen your own road, and now you may travel it," muttered the count. "I will give you one week in which to vacate these premises. And let me tell you," he continued, turning to Lucetta, "that you will have but a sorry husband in young Francisco Biscati, for I have a hand upon him too."

There was a bitter reply upon the lips of the old man, but he repressed it, and motioned for his daughter to leave the room.

"You will repent this," muttered the count, between his clenched teeth.

"An honest man need never repent of having done his duty," proudly returned Mazzani. "In one week, sir, you shall have the fulfilment of your bond."

Count del Brin scowled upon the unfortunate old man, and muttering a curse, he left the cottage.

In the evening, Mazzani's little family were assembled beneath its roof, and with them was young Francisco Biscati. The latter was engaged in the same occupation that had given a livelihood to Mazzani, and he had suffered from the same causes that had beset his old friend. He held the hand of Lucetta in his own, and his handsome features were darkened by a cloud of anguish.

"And is it not enough that the hard-hearted man should grasp upon our property, without seeking to drag our fairest maidens into the lust of his power? No; beneath my own roof we can all find shelter for the present; and should the worst come, we can take but the chances of thousands who have, ere now, been without homes. Dear Lucetta, I would rather die than give you up."

"You shall not," answered the fair girl, as she returned her lover's ardent gaze. "Something must turn up to befriend us."

"Tell me," said Mazzani, breaking out from a fit of absorbing thought, "how stands your property, Francisco? Del Brin hinted that he had a hand upon you."

"Alas! and so he has. When the grand duke gave him this extensive grant, my place came in with the rest. I did not buy of him as you did, but I fear that I shall have no means to pay my rent. But that does not fall due till spring, and by that time —"

The young man hesitated, for the hope he would have pictured had no background.

"I fear you will be worse off than now," the old man concluded for him.

"Perhaps you speak the truth," despondently assented Francisco. "But, at all events, we can raise enough to support us till that time."

"No, no," returned Mazzani, "that cannot be. I can never consent to live upon the result of your hard labour. As it is, you may make out to pay your rent in the spring, but you cannot do it if I drag upon you during the whole long, wet winter. I will betake me to the mountains, and gain my sustenance from the forests. I could hunt when I was young, nor am I too old yet."

There was one there who had not yet spoken, and that was Silvia Mazzani. She was equally as fair as her elder sister, though somewhat more slight in her frame. Her eyes were darker than Lucetta's, and larger, and they sparkled with a fire of intensity that never gleamed in the other's. Her hair was black, too, as the plumage of the raven, and it hung in trembling curling ringlets over her shoulders. Few, if any, had ever read her character aright. Her sixteenth birthday had found her a half-wild, wayward creature, jealous of restraint, ever wandering among the wildest of her native scenery, and listening for hours to the murmur of the brooklet, or the song of the mountain-bird.

When her father spoke, she had been standing at the little latticed window, gazing off at the point where the bold Apennines stood up against the evening sky; but as he closed, she turned quickly about, and started towards the centre of the room.

"Would you wear out the evening of your life among yonder mountains?" she asked, with a depth of expression that startled her three companions.

"If the good of my children require it, yes," returned the old man. "I cannot see you cast, unprotected and unprovided for, upon the world."

"Nor shall your children see you suffering such an existence for their sakes!" exclaimed Silvia, with increasing enthusiasm. "Sixteen years have I lived upon your labour—"

"No, no, my child; you have been a help to me, a source of joy and comfort, the very fountain, you and Lucetta, of my soul's happiness."

"And yet we have lived upon your hard labour. To be sure, since our poor mother died, we have helped to tend your flocks, and have gathered your olives; but that was mere sport—it was pastime for us. The time has now come when we should help our father. His days are drawing to the silvery night of an honest life, age has marked him with his weighty finger, and a giant evil hangs over him. Lucetta, you shall stay and nurse him, and be a companion to Francisco, while I go forth and gather for him sustenance. If we all live for one more year, he shall yet dwell beneath the shelter of his own home—a home from whence the hand of God alone can turn him forth."

Mazzani, Lucetta, and Francisco were, for the moment, confounded by this outpouring of the young girl's soul. The old man was the first to break the

silence, and while the big tears rolled down his cheeks, he asked:

"Silvia, my child, what would you?"

"Save my father."

"I know you would if you could, and, perhaps, your wild, untamed fancy points your mind to some airy castle you vainly would build. Ah, my daughter, you are too young!"

"Father, listen to me. With my voice I can call the birds from their haunts, and chain even the wild chamois with my melody. The good monks of Saint Montani have wondered at my vocal powers, and the abbot has given me much instruction. I will go to Florence. I will work for some good teacher, and gain more instruction. I will—"

"My child, my child," murmured the old man, clasping the inspired girl to his bosom, "you are too young—but God bless you for your noble heart!"

"Father," exclaimed Silvia, brushing away her tears, "did you ever know me to resolve to do a wrong thing?"

"No."

"And did I ever undertake a thing without succeeding?"

"No."

"Then upon this I am resolved. Do not attempt to dissuade me from it. The monks will assist me, and help me on my way."

"But the distance, my child!"

"The good abbot says it is but seventy-five miles."

"And how will you make that?"

"As I have learned to clamber my own native mountains," returned Silvia, with a look of burning, flashing pride. "Let it be as I have said. Lucetta shall stay with you, and she shall be all here that we could both be. Say, my sister, shall it not be so?"

Lucetta stepped forward, and threw her arms about her sister's neck. She remonstrated, she argued, and she pleaded, but it was with relenting tones, and ere the family rested that night, Silvia Mazzani had carried her point.

In a few days the young heroine had made all the preparations for her departure. The kind monks, with whom she had ever been a favourite, had furnished her with a sum of money sufficient to meet her immediate expenses, and the abbot had given her a letter to Bernardo Maletti, a Florentine chorister. She received the parting blessings of her father and sister, felt their tears bedewing her cheeks, and with a parting adieu, she turned away. She dared not look upon the cottage of her childhood till she had reached a point where she could neither see nor hear the grief of her friends, and when she reached that spot, she stopped and turned. A prayer trembled upon her lips, her eyes were turned a moment heavenward, and then she sped on. A new and strange world was before her.

Before dark she reached a small village, a short distance from Arrazzo, where she spent the night. She told her simple story to the host. He knew the bad character of Count del Brin, and he would take nothing for her food or lodging; but, on the next morning, he procured her a conveyance, as far as Figliolo, in a heavy market waggon. This simple act taught her that the world was not all bad, and that there were many kind hearts even among strangers; and, moreover, it gave her new strength and courage.

Her companion of the market waggon was a generous, talkative fellow, full of anecdote and story, and after he had talked for an hour, he attempted to entertain his young companion with a song. She could not but smile, and yet it was a pathetic ballad he had sung, and one, too, which bore strongly upon Tuscan sympathy.

"You smile," said the singer, with a slight censure in his manner.

"Pardon me, sir—I was thinking if I could sing that same song."

"Try it; and if you do it as well as I did, I'll promise you not to laugh."

Silvia commenced the song. The very trees seemed redolent with music, and the air was fairly filled with the soft cadence of her rich voice. At the end of the first verse, the listener let fall his hands upon his knees, and by the time she had finished the piece, the horses were picking their own way. The man's lips trembled, and his bosom swelled. In his simple nature, he had learned of no applause save such as the soul lets out upon the speaking features. At length he picked up his reins, and said:

"I shall never sing again. My voice would frighten me."

"Oh, yes, yes! You must sing to me," said Silvia, who was really delighted with her companion's simple and touching compliment.

The man did sing again, and then his passenger sang, and thus passed the time till near noon, when they arrived at Figliolo. Here Silvia got her dinner, and when she offered to pay for it, she was informed that the waggoner had already paid it. She would

have thanked her kind friend for this modest mark of his favour, but he had gone. That night she stopped within ten miles of the Arno, and before noon on the next day she entered the city of Florence.

She had no difficulty in finding out the residence of Maletti, and what was more fortunate still, he was also the director of the grand opera. Maletti read the letter from the monk, and then he listened to Silvia's story, which seemed to interest him much.

"So you think you can make a singer?" he said, in his usual business way.

"I can try, sir," was the modest reply.

"That's something gained. Now let hear your voice."

The young girl trembled, for she felt herself to be in the presence of the man who was to raise or blast her hopes for ever, and he did really regard her with a stern and cool expression; but she had yet courage enough left to make the trial, however, and she sang one of her native ballads.

Not a muscle of Maletti's countenance changed, and Silvia's heart almost sank within her. That was the prettiest thing she knew, for it breathed the air of her native hills.

"Do you know any other kind of music?"

"A little, sir, that some of the monks have taught me."

"What is it?"

"I know some of Soriano's canons upon the Ave Maria Stella."

"Ah!" and the chorister's face started slightly from its cold aspect. "Sing me one of them."

Silvia obeyed. Her tone may have trembled, but it detracted nothing from the power of the singer's voice.

The monks of Saint Montani had understood most thoroughly the beauties of Soriano's sacred canons, and their young pupil had not forgotten the instructions they had freely given her, and given her, too, when she little thought that they would ever be of use to her.

As she closed the trembling cadence, where the voice died away like the whispering of distant angels, the old director held his breath, but neither his features nor tongue spoke the sentiments of his soul. For a full minute he gazed into the girl's face in silence, it seemed an age to her.

"So you seek to save your father from beggary?" he said, at length, while an almost imperceptible spark of kindness gleamed in his eyes.

"My father and sister, and myself too, Silvia returned, in a tremulous tone.

"What dresses have you?"

"The one I have on, and—"

"Never mind. I suppose you have on your best."

"We were poor sir—very poor." And as the girl spoke, a pearly drop rolled down her fair cheek.

"Yes, yes—I see. I know. We can find you a dress at the opera: we have a rehearsal this afternoon; you shall go with me; you will be delighted. You never heard a large orchestra?"

"No, sir."

Twice she attempted to speak further before she succeeded, and even then it was almost an inaudible whisper.

"Can I sing, sir?"

"Sing?" echoed the director, starting up from his seat. "Sing?" and then he stood and looked at the trembling applicant. "Sing? Yes, like a seraph!" Silvia Mazzani sank into a chair, completely overpowered by the emotions that moved her soul.

The people of Florence were startled by the announcement of a "first appearance" at the opera, and the director had not forgotten to state all the particulars connected with the fair debutante: her sufferings; the affection which led her to seek the public sympathy, and the beauties of her voice, etc.

The evening arrived. The immense opera-house was packed. The first piece went off with the usual amount of applause. The director came to Silvia Mazzani, and bade her prepare. Her first piece was to be one of the sweet national ballads of her own land, and she had rehearsed it with the orchestra several times. She heard the tinkling of a bell, and in a moment more a man came and spoke to Maletti.

"Courage, courage!" whispered the director. "The curtain is up. Look at the people and smile, but try to make them appear like the trees of your native mountains. I will introduce you. Come."

Silvia was led upon the stage. She saw one blaze of gorgeous light, through which gleamed a myriad jewels; and she saw faces, too, and she thought they beamed kindly upon her. Then came the sound of thundering feet and clapping hands.

Instinctively she curtsied, and moved to wards the footlights: then the orchestra commenced a plaintive symphony, and the anxious audience were still as the grave.

Poor Silvia would have resigned all her hopes to have been that moment at her home. She was bewil-

dered, frightened. Twice she attempted to sound the first note, but it came not forth.

"Remember your poor, beggared father!" fell in a low tone upon her ears.

She turned towards the wing, and saw the director. The blood came rushing once more to her face; her heart leaped up from beneath the leaden weight; she took another step forward, and then she commenced.

At the end of the first verse, the stage was literally groaning beneath its weight of flowers, and as she saw the kind looks that greeted her upon all hands, she took courage.

The effort was over. She had passed the fearful ordeal, and once more she was alone; but yet the ponderous walls were trembling with the shouts of applause, that awoke the very thunders of heaven from their rest.

Maletti was again by her side.

"You must go on again," he said. "The people must have that song once more. Courage, courage, Silvia, for you have nobly conquered. Every heart in Florence will be yours in a week."

Winter, with its cold rains and bleak winds, had passed away, and genial spring was smiling upon the mountains, the hills, the vales, and the streams of Tuscany. The gentle breeze laughed amid the foliage: the warm sunlight danced over the budding vines and blossoming trees, and nature once more was robed in her garments of regal power. But amid all this loveliness and beauty, there were sad and heavy hearts.

Within the cottage of Francesco Biscati, towards the middle of the day, were collected Antonio Mazzani, Lucetta and Francesco, and, with his back against the window, stood Niccolotto del Brin. Old Mazzani sat upon a low stool, with his furrowed brow resting upon his open palms; his daughter knelt by his side, with her right hand upon her father's knee, while with the other she was endeavouring to remove his hands from his brow. The young man was standing close by, gazing with intense agony upon the scene.

"Father, dear father, arouse from this despondency. Life is yet left to us."

"Aye, Lucetta, and what a life it must be! We are beggars, and we have been the means of dragging Francesco down with us."

"Antonio Mazzani," pronounced the young man, stepping forward, and laying his hand upon the old man's shoulder, "if you love me, never let me hear that word again. You have not dragged me down. Fate has taken from us our means, and this cruel man has done the rest."

Del Brin scowled fiercely upon the young speaker, and, with a curl of scorn about his lips, he returned:

"This is all of your own choosing. I once offered you the means of redemption, and you refused them. Now you reap the consequences. And yet, if you give me the hand of Lucetta, you shall have your home again."

At the sound of that voice, old Mazzani started to his feet.

"Out upon thee!" he exclaimed, as he turned his full gaze upon the count. "The vulture does not wed the dove for good, neither does the Tuscan noble seek the hand of the goatherd's daughter with honourable intent. Beggary is bad enough, but to be childless—aye, worse than childless—would be insufferable. Del Brin, take the cottage, the lands, and the flocks, and then I would not change places with thee."

"And I will take them. You have had fair warning; your time is up. Go forth now, beggars that ye are, ere you are turned out by force!"

"Come, Lucetta—"

"No, no; he will not turn us out. Oh, father, Francesco, let me be the sacrifice!"

Del Brin smiled a grim smile.

"Never!" firmly said the old man. "I would rather lay you down beneath the mountain forest, there to rest till the resurrection morn. Come, we will go."

Mazzani took his child by the hand as he spoke, and would have led her forth, but at that moment the sound of coach-wheels was heard in the road, and ere long a splendid vehicle drew up near the cot. Del Brin turned to look out at the window, and while yet the old man wondered at this strange arrival, a richly-dressed female rushed into the apartment.

"Father, sister, Francesco!" she cried, and with one bound she hung upon Mazzani's neck. Then she sprang to the half-stupefied Lucetta, and laughed and cried as she twined her arms about her.

It was Silvia Mazzani, and as her bright presence shed its halo about the place, the old man knew that he was saved. Lucetta knew that she was redeemed, while Francesco, in the nobleness of his soul, thought only of the happiness he witnessed.

"Come, are you going?" uttered Del Brin, with a bitter curse upon his lips.

"Ah! here is the count himself," said Silvia, with a sudden change of manner to a queenly grace and dignity. "So you are still at your persecutions, I see."

"Oh, sister, can you redeem our poor old father's home?" murmured Lucretia.

"It's too late now," interrupted Del Brin, with a stamp of his foot. "The places are both forfeited."

"Not quite so fast, sir count," said Silvia, with a proud look. "Here is a letter from the Grand Duke Ferdinand. Read that ere you make up your mind on that point."

The count took the letter, and with a nervous hand he tore it open. As he read it his cheek blanched, and he trembled from head to foot. Silvia waited till he had read it through, and then she said:

"The same conveyance, Count Del Brin, that brought me will take you back to Florence, though I had not expected to find you so readily."

Two of the ducal guards, who had attended Silvia, were called into the cottage, and ere long Del Brin was on his way to the Palazzo Vecchio.

Silvia Mazzani sat down with her new happy friends, and told them all that had passed since she left her native roof. Her first reception in Florence had been the means of sending for her a brilliant fate. The native sweetness of her voice had charmed all souls; the depth of her pathos had brought all hearts to the shrine of her genius; and the generosity, the modesty, the loveliness of her nature had not failed to create friends and admirers on all hands. The Grand Duke Ferdinand had become her special patron; and upon her representation to him of the character and doings of the Count Del Brin, he had ordered the appearance of the latter at the ducal palace.

Silvia spent a month at home, and during that time she sought both the estates upon which her father and Francisco had lived, and ere she returned again to the profession she had adopted, she had the satisfaction of seeing Francisco and Lucretia united, her father made happy and blessed in his old age, and also of knowing that the Count Niccolotto del Brin had been deprived of his extensive grant of land in Siena.

Silvia Mazzani had filled the whole of southern Europe with her fame, when the inducements of a young Florentine noble drew her from the public; but as a wife and a mother, a friend and neighbour, she still shines in the bright social circles of Florence, an ornament to society, and a striking example of what a loving and true-hearted woman can accomplish.

FUEL IN IRELAND.

At a scientific meeting of the Royal Dublin Society, recently, a very valuable paper was read by Mr. Hamilton O'Hara, on "The Supply of Fuel in Ireland." It was characterised by a great research, and gave much useful information as to the extent of the coalfields and peat bogs of Ireland, the different varieties of fuel, and how the immense supply of peat, now of little use for manufacturing purposes, may be rendered, by improved modes of preparation, nearly as valuable as coal.

The area of the bogs of Ireland amounts to 2,830,000 acres, and estimating a cubic yard of dry peat to weigh 550 lb., the quantity of valuable fuel from this source amounts to 6,398,666,666 tons. On pursuing the calculation further, and taking the economic value of turf, compared with that of coal, as 9 to 54, the total amount of peat fuel in Ireland is equivalent in power to about 470,000,000 tons of coal, and estimating coal at 12s. per ton, we find the money value of all the peat in Ireland to be £280,000,000 sterling. Mr. O'Hara referred to the particular qualities of coal found in the various coalfields in the provinces, and quoted statistics as to the quantities found in each, the area occupied in Leinster being 280 square miles. There are 73 collieries at present in Ireland, 31 of which are in Leinster, 29 in Munster, 7 in Connaught, and 5 in Ulster. Of these 46 only are at present worked. The quantity of coal taken from them was 120,000 tons a year, but in 1862 it amounted to 127,000 tons. The number of mines now worked was an improvement on that of former years. In 1853 there were only 19 at work; in 1856 there were 22, and now there were 46.

EXTRAORDINARY LONGEVITY.—Some rare instances of prolonged life have been lately presented. The deaths of five gentlemen and three ladies are recorded whose united ages amounted to 681, giving an average of upwards of 85 years to each. The eldest was a gentleman aged 102; the youngest, also of the same sex, was 80; the eldest lady was 87, and the youngest 82. Again, on the 19th inst. appears, amongst many others, ten whose united ages amounted to 862 years, the eldest being a lady aged 98, and the youngest, of the same sex, being 80 years of age; the eldest gentleman was 91, and the youngest 82. The following day

(the 20th inst.) there appeared also eight ladies and one gentleman representing a total of 789 years—the fair sex, as usual, taking the lead, the eldest having reached 98 years, and the youngest 82; the gentleman was 83. The average age of this group would be 87 years and eight months. On the 21st the decease of eight persons was recorded, whose united ages amounted to 675, giving an average of 84 years and 4 months to each individual; the eldest was 93 and the youngest 80 years of age.

MY FRIEND'S STORY.

THREE summers since, I made the acquaintance of a family, who were travelling. The father and mother, and two beautiful daughters, and a son, possessing mainly beauty, elegance, and intelligence of a high order, constituted the family. This young gentleman greatly interested me. He was a model for a sculptor. Health and strength had set their seal upon his whole person. His cheek glowed with honest red, his eye had the fire of energy, and his step was elastic. I learned from his sisters that he had a remarkable history. His sister said:

"It is painful, and yet pleasant, to recur to the past of our dear brother. We never speak of it, except to our most trusted friends. He will tell you the story, some evening in the twilight, when you cannot see the tears glisten."

He did tell me; and I write it, as nearly as possible, in his own words:

"My first recollections of life," said Henry R., "are of a beautiful place in the country. My memory is hazy and indistinct of the whole of my first years, but certain things stand out in bold and clear relief: such as a smooth lawn, grand old trees, a pond with glancing gold fish, and two deer, with tiny silver bells on their necks. Then I remember a stately lady, and some sylph-like little girls, and a nurse, of whom I was very fond."

I remember being very happy—I think, because, like the deer, I was alive and well, and allowed plenty of fresh air. Then I remember riding, in the care of my nurse, to a place where there was a multitude of houses. The stately lady and the little girls were with us. Then comes a painful recollection of being separated from all these. I was on the water, in a steamer, as I now know, with a lady who was richly dressed, and who commanded attention, but who seemed restless and alarmed all the time. She held me to her bosom almost frantically. I remember all that occurred during the time that we were on board this vessel much more distinctly than previous events. I suppose because the occurrences were less crowded.

"We went to Paris. There we remained till I was old enough to know my place of abode; and gradually the fact faded from my young mind that I had ever had other parents, or care-takers, than the lady with whom I lived, and who treated me with an affection more idolatrous than parental."

"I think I must have been there two years, with nothing to complain of but confinement and seclusion. I had every indulgence. I had a wonderful museum of toys and playthings in my mother's luxuriant apartments. I had surfeits of rich and delicate food, and I had doctors and nauseous medicine. But the green earth, and the blue sky, and the trees which I loved so much, I never enjoyed in their fullness."

"My mother—as I was taught to call my protector—took me sometimes to the Bois de Boulogne, but she guarded me as a prisoner. She never stirred without servants. On the boulevards she seemed, as I see and judge her conduct now, to be proud of exhibiting me, and yet afraid to have me seen."

"One day, when I was about seven years old, I think, two years from our arrival in Paris, 'my mother' had taken me to the Bois de Boulogne in a carriage. The nurse and I had left it, and were walking, when we met a gentleman and lady, strolling listlessly along. The lady was dressed in deep mourning, and was stately as Minerva, though grief had evidently robbed her of much of her queenly bearing. I do not know how it seemed to me then, but it seems so to me now. The moment I saw her my heart beat violently, and I remember that I wanted to run to her. She stopped, gazed fixedly at me, and burst into tears. The nurse hurried me away, as if from some frightful danger. We returned to the carriage, where my mother was waiting for us. The nurse whispered a word to her, and she turned deathly pale. Her lips were compressed, and she trembled violently."

"I was a close prisoner for weeks after this, and for much of that time my mother was very ill. She would embrace me, and beseech me passionately never to leave her. Three years longer I remained in Paris. When I was ten years of age, as I have since learned, my health was completely broken down by confinement and indulgence. The physician who attended 'my mother' at last gave her a warning about me."

"My dear madam," said he, 'you are killing your son and yourself. You must leave Paris. Go anywhere to spend the summer in the sweet country. You will both die in a year if you do not change your mode of life.'

"The poor lady was terribly frightened. She talked very unreasonably to the doctor, about saving my life, and allowing me to remain in Paris. But he was resolute, and in a week we were at Ems."

"I was enchanted to be out of the city, to see the country, to breathe the fresh air, to drink new milk; but, for some unexplained reason, my mother hurried away from Ems, almost as soon as we had arrived. I believe we staid only a day. Our next stopping-place was at the foot of a ragged hill, on the outskirts of the smallest sort of a hamlet, where the people kept goats. Here we rested some weeks, and I made the acquaintance of kids and goats, hens and chickens, and every living thing that blessed the cottage and land of our host."

"My mistress, I can no longer say my mother, though her kindness was unceasing—had brought from England a man and woman servant, whom she trusted implicitly. Proctor, the man, and Clubbuck, the woman, evidently regarded me as a treasure belonging to their mistress that was in danger of being stolen; and their never-ceasing supervision of me was very annoying, to say the least. I could see that Mrs. Millett, my pseudo-mother, was growing more and more nervous and terrified about me, although we saw nobody but ourselves and the people where we abode. She had persisted in accompanying me whenever I went out, but there came a time when she was too weak for this exertion."

One day Proctor took me for a walk, promising to be back in an hour. Proctor had a weakness for drink, and instead of taking me into the country, or up the hill with the goats, he went to an auberge about half-a-mile from our cottage. Few travellers came this way, as a fine road had been opened a league distant, in a village that had grown in the path of improvement. Still, occasionally, an invalid of eccentric tastes would turn to the old grassy thoroughfare, and come through the ancient hamlet and rest for a few days at the sweet little auberge.

Proctor had bought some wine, and was grombling in true English fashion that it was not beer, when a lady and gentleman came up to the door in a post-chaise. The lady drew my attention when she alighted. The same stately form, bowed by premature age, or sorrow, the same sombre garments appeared before me that I had seen three years before in the Bois de Boulogne. The same instinct to spring into her arms leaped into my heart; but Proctor hurried me away, spilling his wine, and setting the can upon the bench. On our way home, I said:

"Proctor, you know these people."

"Indeed I don't," said he.

"You do," said I. "I remember seeing them before in Paris, and I was shut up for months afterwards. Now tell me who they are."

"Don't ask me questions, Master Percy, and I won't tell you lies. They are such as will bring no good to you, or your mother, and if you speak of having seen them, I shall lose my place, and your mother will lose her life."

"I told you that you knew them," said I; now tell me who they are."

"I cannot tell you now, Master Percy. Wait a bit, will you?"

"I could extract nothing further from Proctor; but the next day, though Mrs. Millett was really unable to rise from her bed, we began our return journey to Paris."

"I was very miserable. I was weak, nervous, and sickly, and dejected by a burning curiosity to know why I was treated like a prisoner, and who were the people, who present or absent, seemed to haunt my mother, who I was sure was not my mother."

"Two years more I endured the same prison-life, Mrs. Millett being almost constantly confined to her bed."

"When I was twelve years old my mind was precociously developed, and my body was most miserable. Mrs. Millett had taught me to smoke cigarettes, of Turkish fashion, made of tobacco, opium, and aromatics. They were fragrant, seductive, and stimulating, with a sedative effect that for a time seemed to soothe the misery that I felt, and that was evidently the portion of Mrs. Millett."

"By constantly begging, beseeching, and bribing Proctor, I had learned what he evidently believed, that the stately lady was my mother's sister, that her husband had some interest in robbing my mother of her child; that there was a title, or a fortune, or something, Proctor did not exactly understand what, that was to be the possession of Sir R. R., if I were only put out of the way. I did not believe this story; but it was evident that Proctor was as certain of it as of his existence."

"My life now became almost insupportable from

confinement and mystery. Day and night I strove, often in opium hallucinations, to solve this wretched riddle of my sad existence.

"Mrs. Millett was often delirious from the use of opium, and she raved of secrets long and fearfully guarded. The doctor began to regard me with interest. He even got leave to take me in his carriage, but with the strange stipulation that my face should be stained with an extract of nutgalls, that gave me a deep olive complexion, and effectually disguised me.

"If I had only thought of that before," sighed the poor, weak, emaciated woman.

"I had much affection for Mrs. Millett. I did not believe her to be my mother, but I thought her a near relation. Still, I would have left her, with the assurance that I should never see her more, if I could have been taken to the stately lady whom I saw in the chambers of my early memory, in the more recent recollection of the Bois de Boulogne, and in the auberge, in the hamlet of C—.

"At first the doctor did not seek to win my confidence. He seemed intent only on giving me such relief as his profession taught him was imperatively necessary, and in such a way as should not destroy his other patient. He was a busy man, and could do nothing but carry me the rounds he went. As I came back safely each day, with my Spanish face, Mrs. Millett gained confidence in the doctor, and every day I went out, and breathed at least a better atmosphere than that of the sick-room, redolent of drugs and Turkish cigars.

"Sometimes the doctor had a visit to pay in the country, and then I was supremely happy. I forgot my many miseries, of body and mind, in the green and fragrant country. Every day the doctor increased a few moments the period of my absence; every day he gave me a simple dinner, where he took his own, at a very humble place, though he was a celebrated man. He made me go without till I was fiercely hungry, and the plain food he allowed me was delicious.

"In less than a month I spent nearly all my waking hours with Dr. D—, a man whom all Paris had blessed from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. He taught me to hold and drive his horse. He sent me into the houses to make inquiries and leave parcels. He kept me from smoking all day, and when at night I got home I was too fatigued to do anything, but inquire of Mrs. Millett how she had spent the day, and smoke one cigarette while she was detailing her miseries.

"At length the doctor said to me, one day, very kindly:

"My child, you had better leave off smoking. It is bad for your health, and I detest the smell of smoke that fills your hair and garments."

"If he had asked me to starve myself to death, I think I should have made the effort, so thankful was I to him for relieving me from my dreadful prison home. From this day, he began to treat me with confidence. I believe he never dared to trust me while I was under the influence of opium and tobacco. He spoke of Mrs. Millett's illness, and of the hopelessness of her case. He said turning on me sharply, 'My child, what would you do if your mother should die?' I think I felt toward Dr. D— as though he stood in the place of father to me, and I answered him candidly, 'I would try to find my own mother.'

"Then you know," said he.

"I know what I think," said I.

"Has any one told you anything?"

"Nothing," said I.

"He paused. I was a mere child—he was a prudent man. He only said, 'It is a bad case—opium-monomania. Keep up your courage, my child. Hope for the best; the worst comes soon enough.'

"It was a sad hope that I cherished in my heart, for I loved Mrs. Millet. But I hoped through her death to be delivered from duress, and I hoped again to see the lady that my heart told me was my mother.

"One night the doctor was called to us at a late hour. Mrs. Millett was in convulsions, and it seemed impossible that she could live till morning. In an interval between the fits she tenderly embraced me, and gave into the doctor's hands a casket which she had always guarded with the same jealous care which she took of me.

"It will tell you all," said she. "It is your trust; be faithful to it."

"From that moment she sank, and as the day dawned she died.

"The doctor took charge of her funeral, and comforted Proctor by giving him his wages and a legacy of a hundred pounds. Chubbuck, being a woman and having a harder task, he enriched with a like legacy, and the wearing apparel and the few jewels of her mistress. The casket contained Mrs. Millett's will and some other papers that would perhaps have vitiated it, as proving the testator of unsound mind, but for subsequent events.

"There were some cheques on the Bank of France, a considerable sum in gold, and these were left to the doctor, as payment for his services, also the furniture of her elegant suite of rooms. This the doctor sold for my benefit.

"My child," said he, 'the ready money must last you till we can find somebody to take charge of you and the will. For the present you are my son.' Dr. D— was wealthy, and was able to devote the money and the proceeds of the furniture to my benefit. He began by furnishing me all sorts of masters for physical training.

"We must make a body for you first, my child," said he. 'You were cheated out of your body. You began well but fate played you a terrible trick.'

"Doctor," said I, 'have you the facts of my birth?'

"My child, you are thirteen to-day," said the doctor.

"When you are fourteen I will tell you all I know."

"This was a heavy blow, but I believed in the wisdom and goodness of my guardian, and I set myself to obey all his requirements, thinking that by so doing I should evince the gratitude I felt, and perhaps shorten my period of probation.

"I had a fencing-master, a dancing-master, a gymnast to train me, somewhat in the manner of our modern knights of the ring, and I daily hardened into health, and softened into grace of movement. I became an adept in many exercises, and before the year was past I had won various prizes in my several departments. The doctor bought me an Andalusian horse of low stature and exceeding beauty. The first time I rode him was in the Bois de Boulogne. I had a melancholy pleasure in going there,—in riding past the place where I had seen that queasily lady. As I rode on, thinking of seven years before, and feeling that the month that completed my year of waiting for my secret, or what the doctor knew of it, would be a year in itself, a carriage approached. Was it possible? Yes, yes, it was. The same noble lady, in the same mourning dress, was seated in that carriage with two beautiful young girls, the one apparently eighteen and the other about twenty years of age, and a gentleman.

"With difficulty I sat my horse, so great was my emotion. But I controlled myself and followed them at a distance till they returned to their hotel. I was determined not to lose sight of them. When their carriage stopped at the Hotel de Meurice I was at hand. I boldly went up to the gentleman and gave him my card, and told him I very much wished to speak with him.

"He seemed surprised to be accosted in such a manly way by a French lad, to whom he was a total stranger.

"I cannot explain to you my business, sir," said I, 'except in the presence of Dr. D—, and we cannot meet him till seven o'clock this evening.'

"My dinner-hour," said the gentleman.

"I trembled lest the interview should be put off till morning, and I said:

"I beg you, sir, to allow us to come to you for ten minutes at seven o'clock, as the doctor will only have an hour at that time, and no more leisure till to-morrow."

"You shall come, my good lad, if only because you speak English so well. I never heard a Frenchman speak pure English before."

"I thanked him, without explanation, and rode away. I did not look toward the carriage where the ladies were seated. I dared not. I think in all my life I never exercised as much firmness as at that moment. I sought Dr. D—, and told him what had occurred.

"Don't be too sure, my child," said he.

"He took out the casket from his escritoire, and at seven minutes past seven we were at the Hotel de Meurice.

"The doctor sent up his card to Sir R. R—. In one thing Proctor was right, and we found the gentleman walking nervously about.

"He came up to Dr. D— and took his hand in both his.

"My dear sir," said he, 'do you bring me tidings of my lost son? My wife, Lady R—, insists that this young gentleman —'

"He stopped. He was unable to say another word, and the doctor led him to a seat, and taking from his pocket a paper he gave it to me to read.

"My child," said he, 'command yourself, and read that paper very well.'

"I gave a copy in part;

"To Dr. D—. The child I have in my care is mine and not mine. He is the child of my sister, Estelle R—, by birth, but mine by duty and Providence."

"The paper continued in a rambling, insane way, declaring that she was commissioned by God to humble the pride of her sister by taking away her son; and also that she was commanded to console herself by the love and society of this child, which she had the care of as an infant, but of whom she had been de-

prived on a charge of insanity, &c. When I had read the first four lines of the paper, Sir R. R—, without waiting to embrace me, opened the door to the next room. My mother stood there, pale, and still, as a marble statue.

"He is ours," said my father, and I was instantly locked in the embrace of my mother. For nine long years she mourned for me—not as dead. Certain death would have been a precious relief to the bereaved mother's heart. Her joy now was deep, as her sorrow had been. My father greeted me when my mother could allow him the privilege, and then my sweet sisters gave me many kisses.

"The good doctor was one of the happiest of living men. My aunt's property belonged by right to my mother, and so no question of sanity had to be raised respecting the will.

M. O.

A LARGE "CANARD" FROM THE NORTH.

A TALE of a murder, perpetrated in a mysterious manner, and of the discovery of the murderers by scientific means, is now the common talk of the inhabitants of the Russian capital.

In the so-called old city, on the right shore of the Neva, behind the fortress, is a small house which enjoys the reputation of having once been the residence of Peter the Great. One of the few rooms in the house is stated to have been used as a sleeping chamber by the celebrated monarch, and this apartment is now visited with feelings of veneration and awe by many thousands of Russians. Although the room is not in reality a chapel, a priest is attached to it, and it is richly adorned with gold and precious stones, on which account two soldiers are constantly on duty there.

A few evenings since, after the priest had withdrawn to his dwelling, situated on the opposite side of the street, he was summoned to return to the chapel, as two men required his services. The good man soon repaired to the little chamber, and afterwards returned to his house. On the following morning the two soldiers on guard were found murdered at their posts, and the alms-box, which contained 400 roubles, had disappeared from its accustomed place, whilst the costly articles with which the room was so plentifully adorned, were found undisturbed.

It was suggested that the eyes of the murdered soldiers should be immediately photographed, in the hope of successfully testing the discovery recently made in England, when, to the surprise of all, the result was the production of the portraits of two soldiers of the private guard at the palace, on whose breasts were the insignia of the Cross of St. George. The murderers were at once sought out and apprehended.

"FALSE HAIR."—The "false-hair merchants" of London import annually, at present, no less than five tons of maiden locks!

SALT EXPORTS.—Three years ago, not a pound of salt was made in Saginaw Valley, Mich. There has been exported from the valley, during 1863, not less than 3,000,000 barrels.

GREAT BREAKWATER.—The greatest artificial harbour in the world is that of Cherbourg, in France. It was a roadstead open to the sweep of the ocean swells until 1783, when De Cessart, an engineer, proposed and commenced the construction of its famous breakwater. This consists of a sea-wall 12,700 feet in length, which also stands 15 feet above the highest tides.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON.—It is now decided that a portion of the site of the International Exhibition is to be converted into a museum. There are many of the finest specimens of stuffed animals at the British Museum, which, for want of space, have been put away, and these will be removed to South Kensington. As the spot selected is close to the Horticultural Gardens, it will make a most valuable addition to the attraction of those grounds. The decision was only come to a few days ago.

KILLING OF A GRANDSON OF THE HON. SPENCER PERCIVAL IN NEW ZEALAND.—An account has been received of an action at the Mauku, in which a descendant of Bellingham's victim fell by the hand of a New Zealander. The circumstances of his death are thus described:—When Lieutenant Percival fell, several of his men attempted to remove him from the field. The gallant fellow would not permit this, however, recalling them to their sterner duty by the words, 'Leave me alone; revenge my death.' This young officer's loss will be greatly felt by the volunteers, by whom he was greatly esteemed. He was the son of Spencer Percival, Esq., for many years a leading member of the House of Commons, and grandson of the unfortunate Prime Minister of that name, who was shot in the lobby of the house."



[ETHEL CLIFTON IS WARNED OF DANGER.]

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

CHAPTER V.
A WINDFALL.

THE following morning brought with it a communication to Sir Hugh, which was as welcome as unexpected. A letter came to him from Amsterdam which opened a prospect of carrying out his plans for Vernor from a most unexpected quarter.

The head of a law firm there thus addressed him: "SIR HUGH METHURN—Sir,—The enclosed papers will show you that your young ward, Ethel Clifton, has become the sole legatee of the fortune of her mother's uncle, Josiah Winston, who died in this city a few weeks since.

"Mr. Winston was long engaged in trade here, and he has amassed a considerable fortune, which he has unconditionally bequeathed to his grand-niece. You are named as her guardian and trustee, and on the day of her marriage, with your approbation, her fortune is to be paid over to her husband.

"It is advisable to wind up the estate without delay, and we think we may congratulate the young lady on coming into possession of at least fifty thousand pounds in personal property and real estate. Hoping to hear from you at your earliest convenience, and that an agent will be sent over to see to the settlement of our client's claims, we are

"Respectfully,
"HOOVER AND BROTHER."

Sir Hugh read and re-read this letter, wondering if any man could have been so unsuspicious as to throw the inheritance of his ward so completely in his power. Fifty thousand pounds was a magnificent fortune, and little Ethel was really the possessor of all this!

He turned over the schedule sent, and found that the greater portion of the estate was in ready money, the remainder in houses in the city of Amsterdam which yielded a handsome sum from their annual rents.

Among the papers Sir Hugh found a second letter addressed to himself, which explained Mr. Winston's confidence in him. It was dated a month back, and had evidently been written from the death-bed of the deceased merchant:

"SIR HUGH METHURN,—Although I know nothing personally of you, yet the man who stepped forward to the assistance of my unhappy niece, who received her orphan child beneath his roof, must be eminently worthy of confidence.

"I have no near relative save this little girl, and to

her the earnings of my life must go. Since my health began to fail, I have caused inquiries to be made concerning my brother's family, and thus I have learned the story of your beneficence. That you took the orphan to your heart and home is to me sufficient evidence that you are worthy of the trust I repose in you.

"Ethel will have an allowance of three hundred pounds a year until her marriage. On that event, if she marries with your consent, the whole of her fortune will pass into the possession of her husband. I do not believe in rendering a woman independent of the protector she herself usually chooses, and I believe that you will not permit her to bestow herself on one who is unworthy of such confidence.

"With my dying regards to my unknown niece, I conjure her to obey the wishes of him who has proved himself her friend when she had no other.

"JOSIAH WINSTON."

"What a precious windfall!" muttered Sir Hugh. "If Vernor will only listen to me now, his fortune is made. Fifty thousand pounds to come into his possession on the day of his marriage with the heiress; and what is to keep them from being married out of hand? Where lands and fortunes are at stake, children have often entered into such bonds in this country, and then remained at school till they reached years of maturity. I'll do it, and Vernor shall travel on the continent while his bride is getting her education."

At this moment the steps of his son were heard crossing the hall, and Sir Hugh called to him. Vernor came to the door of the room and put his head in.

"I am engaged for this morning, father, and if you have no particular business with me, I wish you would excuse me a few hours."

"But I have very particular business with you, to which everything else must be deferred. Come in and shut the door, for I have something to reveal to you which nearly affects your future fortunes."

Vernor's curiosity was aroused by these words, and he came in, saying:

"Oh, if that's the game, I can put aside my affairs for the present. But what can this wonderful revelation be?"

"Read these," replied Sir Hugh, offering him the letters, "and then I will see if your thought allies with my own."

Vernor obeyed, and then returned the letters with an expression his father scarcely liked.

"Well, sir," he said, "Ethel has become suddenly rich; but how does that affect my fortunes?"

"You are very dull, or you would see that, as her husband, you can gain possession of the whole of this money."

Vernor looked annoyed.

"She is but a child, Sir Hugh; and, before she is old enough to marry, I may find a better way of recruiting our exhausted finances."

"You must be very hopeful, then," sneered his father. "If Ethel is a child, so much the better for you; for she can have no will of her own to oppose to mine."

Vernor started and looked steadily at the speaker.

"Are you in earnest, Sir Hugh? Would you make such a use of the trust confided to you?"

"What better use can I make of it, than to advance the interests of my own son? We need this money, and it will be no wrong to Ethel to secure it in this way. You can travel, and learn the ways of the great world, while your child-bride can remain with your aunt till she is old enough to assume her position as Lady Methurn."

"But really, Sir Hugh, I do not care particularly for Ethel, and she likes my cousin far better than she does me. She will develop into a gentle, quiet woman, like Aunt Agnes; but the being I shall love must be brilliant and dashing, passionate and vivid in her nature. No, Sir Hugh, I can never love little Ethel as my wife."

"Believe me, Vernor, the woman you describe would make you wretched. I speak from experience; for I have loved such a one, and lived to loathe and fear her. Do not walk in my footsteps, but grasp the good fortune that has been thrust upon you."

"I have heard that you did not live happily with my mother; but I was not aware that such feelings had grown up between you," said the young man, with a slight show of emotion.

"Your mother! Oh, no—not to her did I refer. Your mother brought me wealth; but I married her after the hey-day of passion was past. We were not happy, and I am afraid it was more my fault than hers. Let that pass; it has nothing to do with the matter in hand."

"I am afraid it has, sir; for if I marry Ethel, I shall, in my turn, make her miserable. I know that I can never love her. She is too sensitive—too refined, to assimilate with such as I am. Besides, as I said before, she likes Gerald far better than me."

Sir Hugh spoke with some passion:

"Then you are ready to let all this money go to your cousin without a struggle to retain it? No wonder he has been pronounced the heir to good fortune if you resign your best chances in his favour."

Vernor flushed deeply; this was touching him on a tender point; but, after a pause, he said:

"If I should consent to this arrangement, sir; if Ethel can be induced to give me her hand before she is old enough to make a choice for herself; will it not be a terrible abuse of the trust her uncle has reposed in you? I need money, and the temptation is great to avail myself of this chance to obtain it: but you will be censured for getting possession of your ward's fortune in so irregular a manner."

"Why should we care for the scandal of others if we are well paid for it? I have already arranged in my own mind what is to be done. An agent must be sent to Amsterdam, and you shall go thither as the husband of the heiress. There will be no difficulty in settling with you in that character, and then you can make an extended tour on the continent. You may be absent four or six years if you wish it, and return only when your bride is old enough to be claimed. This is the only avenue of escape from the fox-hunting life you have hitherto led. I believe you have ambition, and this is your sole chance to gratify it. The child is yielding and easily persuaded. She will grow up with the idea that her allegiance is due to you, and she will learn to love you."

Vernor pondered a few moments, and then asked: "How much am I to sell myself for, Sir Hugh? What does the lawyer say is the amount of her fortune?"

"Fifty thousand pounds—a splendid inheritance, by Jove! and besides, Ethel stands almost in the direct succession to her grandfather's titles and estates. She is the daughter of the second son, and the eldest is a man of dissipated habits, who is likely to die unmarried. Think of it! She may yet be Viscountess Clifton in her own right, with a rent-roll of five thousand pounds a year. You're a fool, Vernor, to hesitate a moment."

"Thank you, sir; but I am not quite such a simpleton as to permit all these chances to fall to Gerald's lot. I suppose I must make a compromise of taste and feeling and accept the little one as my wife—that is, if she will consent to take me."

"I have no fears about that. We can soon win her over; make her a few handsome presents, indulge her fancies for a few weeks, and you will gain the ground that Gerald's absence must cause him to lose. I will write to the lawyers and tell them that an agent will be sent over shortly, and in the meantime you must commend yourself to Ethel that she may not be difficult to manage."

Vernor arose with a resigned air.

"What destiny will be submitted to, I suppose; so I shall begin forthwith to play the part of lover to the baby heiress. But I say, Sir Hugh, will it not be necessary to keep what is going on from Aunt Agnes? Her notions are rather rigid, and I fancy she looks on Ethel as her peculiar property. It was she who took her, you know, and she has had the care of her since she has been with us."

Sir Hugh reflected a moment, and then said:

"There is no need to tell Mrs. Methurn of what has happened just yet. I will make things straight with her when the proper time comes. Curt your impatient temper, Vernor, and be gentle with the child. She has a very affectionate nature, and you can easily step into the place Gerald lately held. Ethel has long wanted a pony. I saw a beautiful one a short time ago at farmer Conway's that Kate has been in the habit of riding. He said he would sell it, if he could get his price, which is somewhat high, but that is of no consequence now. Here is money; buy it, and send to Taunton for the necessary outfit: and, by the way, order a hat and plumes for Ethel, and a scarlet habit. That will be sure to take her childish fancy."

Vernor laughed.

"You are going into the affair in earnest, sir, and you seem to know something of the way to win a woman."

"Why should I not, when the sex was once the study of my life? They all like pretty things, and as a natural consequence, they love him best who can give them the most of them. A few hundred pounds, judiciously used, will make Ethel think you perfectly charming."

"I bow to your experience, Sir Hugh, and take the one you have so obligingly furnished. I shall, as Shakespeare or somebody else says, 'smile, and smile, and be a villain,' for this poor fragile little creature I shall never, never love—I shall spend her gold and break her heart, I know, beforehand."

"Oh, well, if such is your resolution, you had better leave her to Gerald, for I should be sorry to push my plans to that consummation. Ethel may develop into a brilliant woman, though she is so retiring as a child. But whatever she may be, your cousin will never hesitate to take her and her fortune."

The reference to Gerald acted as Sir Hugh intended it should. Vernor frowned, bit his lips, and decisively said:

"I shall not allow Gerald the chance. Let him delve his fortunes out of musty parchments; that is all he aspires to, but I shall secure the one that is ready made to my hand, even with the incumbrance of a wife that may prove distasteful to me."

"That is settled, then?"

"Certainly; give me the money, and I will ride over to Conway's at once and make sure of the pony, though I expect some black looks from Kate for my pains."

"By the way, that reminds me that Conway told me that Kate would accept young Crofts if you would cease your attentions to her. The father has sense enough to know that you have no intention to marry her, but it seems the girl thinks differently. It was very presuming in Kate Conway to aspire to become my daughter-in-law, and you must have said many absurd things to lead her to form such a hope."

"Perhaps I have, sir," replied the young man, indifferently; "but you need have no apprehensions on that score. Kate and I have come to an understanding, and she told us yesterday that she had accepted Crofts. I promise her a bridal present, and the money I shall pay for the pony will probably buy her wedding finery."

"So much the better. I suppose Kate Conyers, with her bold, black eyes and flippant tongue is your ideal of a brilliant woman. Go into the world, Vernor, and see such women as I have known, then you will blush for your penchant for the village beauty."

"I shall take your advice, sir. But what if I should see there one who will make me wish that the bonds you would have me assume could be as lightly cast aside as my passing admiration for poor Kate? Such a thing might easily happen when my hand is pledged to a baby, and my heart free from any preference for my child-bride."

"Without the fortune of the child-bride, you will have no chance to see them at all, so you must balance one against the other, and decide for yourself. I shall not urge you further."

"There is no need, sir. Necessity has no choice, as you perfectly comprehend. Gilded slavery or indigent obscurity are the alternatives. I choose the former, and resign myself to the fate with the philosophy of a martyr. Hand over the *quid pro quo*, Sir Hugh, and I am away upon my errand."

The baronet gave him his purse, and Vernor sauntered from the room, lightly humming a song. He encountered Ethel on the lawn, wearing a large garden-hat, and leading a pet fawn, which Gerald had given her, by a long ribbon attached to his collar. Exercise had flushed her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled with animation. Vernor regarded her critically, and he thought:

"She will really be very pretty, but then she is such a little creature. I like stately women, and this one is going to be a fairy. But what does it matter after all! The weight of her purse will make up for any deficiency in her own weight."

Ethel threw back her curls and came dancing toward him with smiling lips.

"Oh, Vernor, I have had such a delightful romp with 'Pitapat.' Isn't that a nice name? It's just the sound his feet make on the hard road."

"It is a very suitable name, ladybird! and shows that you have a nice ear."

"Oh, I didn't give it to him. Gerald gave him to me, and he named him."

"Well, pretty one, I shall not permit Gerald to be the only one to make presents to you. I am going to give you something better worth having than your spotted fawn, for he will soon outgrow his spots, and become a dangerous playmate. My present shall do you some good."

The child's eyes brightened, and she threw her arm over her pet's neck, and said:

"This has done me a great deal of good, for aunt says my colour is brighter since I had Pitapat to run after. But what are you going to give me, Vernor? I had no idea you would ever think enough of me to give me anything."

"Oh, you're mistaken there, Ethel. I have always thought a great deal of you, but you were so much taken up with my cousin, and with your studies, that you had no time to notice me. It will be different now Gerald is away; and I am going to teach you how to manage a pony of your own."

She clasped her hands in childish ecstasy.

"Dear Vernor—a real, live pony? Oh, how delightful! Gerald said you would teach me to ride after the hounds; but I do not wish to do that; I should be afraid of breaking my neck. But if you give me a pony, perhaps I shall like to do it after I get used to riding him."

"Yes—no fear of that. You've got a flash of spirit in you that will come out by-and-bye. You must be very lonely now Gerald is gone, and I mean to make you my especial pet. Don't you think we shall get along together very well?"

Ethel looked rather doubtful, and she dubiously said:

"If you will have patience with me, and not get into what old Maud calls your tantrums. You know you flash up so quick, and lose your temper, so that—sometimes I am quite afraid of you. Gerald always—"

"Never mind Gerald now," he impatiently broke in. "You need not expect me to be like him, for I do not care to imitate him, highly as you appreciate him; but I mean to be as patient as Job where you are concerned, for I have set my heart on filling my cousin's place while we are still together."

"Dear Vernor, I hope you are not thinking of going too. What should we do, with you and Gerald both gone?"

"Would you really be sorry, ladybird, if I were to leave you?" he asked, and he looked earnestly into the sweet face that was upturned to his.

"Oh, so sorry! Besides, why should you go away? You have not your living to gain, as Gerald has."

"Then you do love me a little bit?"

"Of course I love you. Are you not my big brother? You have vexed me sometimes, but I always forgive you for it, because you know you can't help getting into a passion when anything goes wrong with you; and I know that I am often a sad worry to you. I am a timid little goose, but if you will teach me how to use my pony, I will try to be more courageous."

"That is right; and I promise you to try and restrain my quick temper. We will make a mutual compact, Ethel, and I shall be sure to keep mine, for I have set my heart on rivaling Gerald. I am jealous of your preference for my cousin, for I think you a charming little person."

The child opened her eyes with surprise at the first compliment Vernor had ever paid her, and she archly said:

"What would Kate Conway say if she heard that. She was vexed that you danced with me in preference to her on May-day."

"I fancy she wouldn't care much about it, for she is too busy arranging for her wedding to think of anything else. Don't you know that she is going to marry Tom Crofts?"

"And you must wear the willow," she seriously said. "Here is a tree convenient; let me bind a spray around your hat."

"Do; but I shall wear it, not as a trophy of defeat, but a promise of victory;" and he took off his hat and held it towards her, while she twined around it a long willow wreath from an immense tree, under the shadow of which they stood. In a few seconds the fantastic ornament was adjusted, and Vernor replaced the hat upon his head with a flourish.

"You have crowned me, ladybird, with the symbol of hope, rather than of despair. Good morning now, and dream of what gifts the good fairy will bring you within the next three days. Sir Hugh has opened his heart and purse, and ordered a birth-day gift that will be splendid; but I shan't tell you what it is to be."

"How good of Sir Hugh! Nobody but Aunt and Gerald ever thought of my birth-day before; and it's very kind of you and your father to remember that I shall be ten years old on the ninth of this month."

Vernor might truly have told her that he had only remembered it himself within the last few moments, and offered it as an excuse for the unusual liberality shown toward her; but he only said:

"You must say nothing to my father, Ethel, for he wishes to surprise you; and I should have given you no hint of the pretty things in store for you. Sir Hugh has adopted you as his daughter, and in future he intends to treat you as such."

"He is very kind, and I will try and be a good child to him, for, oh! Vernor, if he had not let me stay at the Priory, I do not know what would have become of me when my poor mamma died."

"Nor I either, for you had no one to take care of you; but if you are obedient, and mindful of Sir Hugh's wishes, he will never repent of his kindness to you. He may ask some return from you some day, Ethel, and then you can show your gratitude."

"I will do anything—anything he asks me," impulsively exclaimed the child, with flushed cheeks and radiant eyes.

Vernor pinched her cheek, and laughingly said:

"That will do, ladybird. I see you are in earnest, and I will leave the future to develop itself. I must go now and bargain for the pony."

He blew a kiss to her from the tips of his fingers, and left her standing under the old tree lost in a delighted reverie. It had long been the darling wish of her heart to have a pony of her own, and no gift could have been so welcome to her. Her tastes were simple and natural, but Sir Hugh rightly judged that her childish heart could be won over by gifts and attentions to which she had been unaccustomed.

CHAPTER VI.

DURING the next few weeks of her life, Ethel might have believed that she was suddenly endowed with a fairy godmother, whose chief pleasure it was to minister to her peculiar fancies. The pony, a beautiful bay, with skin like satin, and long flowing mane, plaited with scarlet ribbons, bearing a saddle with embroidered housings of the same colour, and gaily decorated bridle, was led to the door on her birthday morning; at the same hour a mysterious box made its appearance in her room, from which was drawn a complete outfit for the young equestrian. A fine cloth habit, embroidered with gold, and a hat with long, white plumes floating to her shoulders. There was also a small riding whip, with an inlaid handle, and a pair of fairy gauntlets, ornamented to match the dress.

The wild delight of the child, as each article was successively exhibited, amused and surprised Mrs. Methurn; she said:

"These are beautiful gifts, Ethel! but I am afraid, Sir Hugh must have taxed his means to afford them. I begin to think, my dear, that the material things to which I have sought to render you indifferent, have great power to give you happiness."

"Yes," replied Ethel, frankly. "These presents make me very happy, and I should be the most ungrateful of creatures if they did not. But I hope Sir Hugh has not spent money for them which he cannot afford. Do you think he has done that, aunty?"

"I suppose not, my love! for Sir Hugh is not a man to embarrass himself to minister to the gratification of a child. He must have laid by something for this purpose from the sum annually paid by your grandfather. He seems fonder of you lately, and he told me last night, that in future he should regard you as his daughter."

"Yes," Vernon said he meant to adopt me as such. My own relations care nothing for me, and but for Sir Hugh and yourself I must have been a poor little homeless wanderer. Dear aunty, my heart is filled with gratitude to you both," and Ethel threw her arms around Mrs. Methurn, and kissed her many times.

The voice of Vernon was heard from the hall below, impatiently calling on Ethel to descend and mount her pony. She hurried to don her riding gear and join him. She scarcely glanced at herself in the old-fashioned mirror, though the unwonted brilliancy of her appearance might have tempted an older person to linger a moment before it. But she remembered Vernon's impatience, and she was afraid to delay a moment longer than was necessary.

Vernon surveyed her approvingly, and lifted her to her saddle as he gaily said:

"Titania on horseback, I declare. Ethel, the dryads will be envious of you to-day. Sir Hugh must see the effect of your outfit; let us ride past his window and salute him."

He sprang into his own saddle, and taking the reins of her pony, led him to the side of the house in which Sir Hugh's chamber was situated. He was sitting beside the open window, and when Ethel called out to him he smiled, and said:

"You are pleased with your birthday present, then, my dear?"

"Pleased! oh that is a poor word. I am enchanted; you could not give me anything else I should have liked half so well."

"Then I am satisfied, ladybird, for I only wished to gratify you."

"Dear Sir Hugh, what have I done to deserve all this kindness?"

"You have been a bright and happy little sprite to us all, Ethel, and in future you will be more to us than you have ever been. Take your ride, and be as happy, my child, as I wished to make you."

There was a tone of paternal tenderness in his voice which deeply touched the little girl, for Sir Hugh was a consummate actor when he had anything to gain by playing a part.

Vernon touched the pony lightly with his riding-whip, and they cantered away under the shadow of the old trees, the flickering sunlight flashing at intervals over the gorgeous dress of the young rider. Ethel had practised riding a little under Gerald's tuition, and she soon gained confidence enough to manage her pony herself. He seemed perfectly gentle, and her fears were soon sufficiently allayed to permit her to prattle to her companion with the freedom and vivacity of her years. Vernon had no cause to lose his temper, and they made the circuit of the woodland, and came in sight of the gipsies' camp.

"Shall we ride toward the camp?" he asked.

"Oh, no; I am afraid of those wild people. Let us keep as far from them as possible."

A discordant laugh arose from a thicket near which the pair had halted, and a voice which both recognized as that of the Gipsy Queen said:

"Ha! ha! danger from us you need not fear, little

butterfly; but it is near you—your evil fate rides by your side, and I bid you beware of him. The dark shadow in your line of life which I would not tell you of when we last met is settling over you. Poor little dove! where shall she find shelter when the hawk is making ready to pounce upon her?"

The woman issued from her covert, and stood directly in their path. Vernon angrily spoke:

"Move aside and leave your warnings to those that fear them. How dare you speak thus to this young lady?"

"It is a very tiny young lady," replied the gipsy, mockingly. "I should call her a baby, but since she is decked out thus some good fortune must have come to her. Something for nothing is not your father's motto, nor yet yours, young sir. Little girl, you were born to bright fortunes; do not mar them by giving a bad man power over you. I see that evil threatens you—evil that will culminate in woe in time to come if you do not heed my warning."

Ethel had grown very pale, and she faintly said:

"Pray get out of my path; let us ride on."

"Ho! you fear me, and yet you would ride away with one who has more power over your fate for evil than is exercised by the imps of darkness. Go on then, but the day will come in which you will recall my words in anguish and bitterness of heart."

She stepped aside, and Vernon, after casting a threatening glance upon her, rode rapidly forward, again grasping the bridle-rein of his young companion. When they were out of sight of their encampment, he slackened their pace and said:

"That woman has some strange grudge against my father, and she hates me because I am his son. Do not heed her words, Ethel, for they are only dictated by malice."

"Yet it is said that these people claim the power to read the future."

"Do you, then, believe that I would become your evil fate?" he reproachfully asked.

"No, no; there indeed she must be mistaken. I will not think of what she said, for I do not believe it."

"No, Ethel, you must not give credence to her idle words, for you will soon find that I intend to become your best friend. Sir Hugh has lately come in possession of quite a large sum of money, and he has made me a magnificent present. Out of that he bought your beautiful pony; and, from mine, I am going to give you something else you will like."

The child laughed. Then checking herself, she gravely said:

"The pony is quite enough, Vernon. You will have a use for all your money."

"But it pleases me to use a portion of it for you. But you have not named your dainty steed, yet, ladybird. What shall we call him?"

"Lightfoot," she quickly replied, "for he scarcely seems to touch the ground as he skims over it."

"Ha! A very pretty name. Lightfoot merits his cognomen, if ever a pony did. Now, let us enter to the Priory, and show Aunt Agnes how much you have profited by your equestrian lesson."

Ethel gathered the bridle in her small hand, and they swept rapidly forward.

Sir Hugh and Mrs. Methurn were both near the hall-door, watching for their return.

During their absence, the lady had been vainly endeavouring to discover the origin of Sir Hugh's sudden change towards her protégée. That both the baronet and his son were moved by some motive, which was sedulously concealed from her, Mrs. Methurn felt convinced; but, for the present, she found her brother impenetrable. He only assured her that it had long been his intention to place her in the position of an adopted daughter; and the savings he had made enabled him to indulge in the extravagances which so much surprised her.

Sir Hugh furthermore added that he had resolved to fit up an apartment for Ethel's special use, and he had ordered the furniture from London.

Mrs. Methurn listened in silent astonishment, convinced that, beneath this liberality, lay some deep design in which the fate of her protégée was implicated. She quietly asked if Colonel Clifton was dead, and Ethel the next in succession to her grandfather's estate, that such changes were to be made in her favour. In reply, Sir Hugh assured her that Colonel Clifton was living and likely to live many years yet. That he had reason for the changes he meditated, which in due time would be made known to his sister-in-law, for the present, he only asked her to allow her young charge more freedom than usual, that she might be more of a companion to Vernon.

The absence of Gerald was the reason assigned for this, but Mrs. Methurn knew that only to Ethel was his departure a source of regret, for Vernon had evidently regarded the presence of her son more as a restraint than a pleasure. That evening in going into her room, Ethel found an elegant workbox, fitted up in the most costly and beautiful manner. This was

Vernon's birthday present, and beside it lay a pin-cushion worked by Mrs. Methurn, and a copy of verses written by Gerald.

Over the last she shed a few tears, but they were wiped away to plunge into the secret recesses of the box, and bring out the various feminine treasures it contained. These filled her with delight; but the crowning joy of all was a case fitted in the centre of the box, which, on being opened, displayed a *parure* of sparkling rubies set with the simplicity suited to one of her tender years.

Mrs. Methurn watched her rapturous delight, and she was filled with disquietude as to the meaning of this sudden change toward the child who had been rather tolerated than welcomed at the Priory.

In a few more days the furniture which had been ordered arrived. The walls of a large room adjoining Mrs. Methurn's were covered with rose silk hangings, and a set of heavily-carved furniture, which was a recent fashion imported from France, was arranged within it.

Everything was very grand, and Ethel moved about in this stately apartment looking more childlike than ever, but she unconsciously began to feel a new sense of importance in the attentions lavished upon her. Vernon dexterously made her believe that the change was due to him, and her young heart began to cling to him with as much tenderness as she had once felt for Gerald.

A beautiful wardrobe next arrived, filled with articles which a young princess might have worn, and the exquisite embroidery and fine laces with which the clothing was adorned increased Mrs. Methurn's astonishment at the sudden caprice of Sir Hugh to elevate the hitherto neglected little waif into a person of such importance. She could not penetrate the mystery, yet it filled her with uneasiness as to his real intentions towards the child of her affections.

Vernon was using every art to ingratiate himself with Ethel, and with deep pain Mrs. Methurn saw that her artless and affectionate nature was strongly impressed by his newly-awakened interest in her affairs.

(To be continued.)

VALLEY OF ASIAN SWEET WATERS.

"THE Valley of the Sweet Waters of Asia"—the Turkish Myde Park—is a charming spot, shut in by ranges of hills on three sides, with the Bosphorus glittering before it, and a fine view of the opposite castles of Europe. At a white marble fountain, which looks like a square-built temple, ornamented with inscriptions in coloured and golden letters, Turkish women assemble to fill their earthen water-jars. Under the shade of the plane-trees sit women of a higher class on cushions which are carried from the caïques by slaves.

Nothing in point of colouring and grouping can be more strikingly beautiful than these clusters of women by the trees and fountain. Imagine five or six in a row, their jet black eyes shining through their white veils, under which you can see the gleam of jewels which confine their hair (often dressed, by-the-by, very much à la Eugénie). Your first impression is, that they look just like a bed of splendid flowers. The lady at the top of the row of cushions, and evidently the chief wife, is dressed in a ferdjee of the palest pink, edged with black velvet or silver; her face and neck all snow-white gauze, under which gleams a silver wreath or sprig of jewels, for the *yashmak* in these days is so transparent as rather to add to the beauty of the wearer than to hide it. She generally carries a large fan of peacocks' feathers with both sides alike. The next is arrayed in the palest straw colours shot with white; then, perhaps, follows an emerald green edged with gold, and by her side a lovely violet. The white *yashmak* contrasts prettily with all these colours. The ferdjees of the slaves are often of a bright yellow or scarlet edged with black, which, with the few dressed in darkest brown, and green, harmonize perfectly with the light and delicate colours.

NAVAL TRAINING.—A considerable number of boys are now entered weekly on the books of the Fiscard, at Woolwich, the majority of whom are forwarded to the western ports to be placed on board the training ships. The age of entry has been extended from fourteen to sixteen years.

THE ALEXANDRA.—The damages incurred by the detention of the Alexandra, the two rams at Liverpool, and the steamers at Glasgow, if the act should be finally adjudged illegal, will fall heavy on the Government, but the costs of the aggrieved parties must be paid by themselves.

IRON SHOT.—Some experiments have been made at Portsmouth to prove the relative effect of shot composed of steel, cast, wrought, and case-hardened iron upon a 5½ inch plate, manufactured by the Messrs

Company. The guns used were the 68-pounder and Armstrong smooth-bore 100-pounder. The target was repeatedly pierced by the hardened shot from the latter.

A FRENCHMAN WORTHY OF BEING AN ENGLISHMAN.—The captains, mates, engineers, and crews of the South-Coast Company's boats which run between England and France, and all the clerks and porters in connexion therewith on the Dieppe side—at least, those who have been in the service twelve months—have each been presented with a week's pay by Mons. A. D. Bosson, who is at heart a thorough Englishman. The gifts were to celebrate the season, and the donor requested that the recipients would not thank him, but show their gratitude by a steady and faithful discharge of their duties.

SCIENCE.

SEA-WALLS.—The French have introduced a new system of building sea-walls which promises satisfactory results. They form gigantic blocks of concrete, weighing about 25 tons each, which are deposited in the sea along the line of a breakwater, to afford protection to their sea-walls. A new mole at Algiers consists of a base of rubble 17 feet in height and 156 feet in width, and the concrete blocks are deposited in the sea until they rise to a height of 83 feet above the rubble, making a total height of 50 feet. A new harbour has been enclosed at Marseilles, surmounted by a sea-wall and protected by such concrete blocks.

LOCOMOTION BY HYDRAULIC POWER.—Mr. W. Symons proposes, for metropolitan underground or other railways, to have fixed steam-engines at convenient distances, whose work would be to pump water into hydraulic accumulators; this water-power under pressure to be conveyed in pipes along the railway: at proper distances, wheels, as in Messrs. Hawthorn's plan, must be placed, but instead of wire ropes each set of wheels must have connected with it a small hydraulic engine; or, where two lines of rail were used, it might be placed between the two. The train, while progressing, would turn on and off the water as required, and thus no useless power would be expended. By the same sort of power he proposes to work through certain wide streets narrow lines of railway contained in and on tubular viaducts, with open latticed sides and bottoms, so as not to obstruct the light and air; these tubular viaducts to be supported on iron arches, one pillar of these arches to be in a line with the curb-stones of the street pavement, and the other against the houses.

ENERGY OF HEATED WATER.

Two theories once prevailed about the character of heat, and each had its advocates. Under one theory heat was held to be an imponderable fluid; under the other it was considered to be a mode of material action. The latter theory is now universally received. Heat may be converted into mechanical motion and mechanical motion will develop heat. By laboured and subtle experiments heat has also been measured, and a unit has been adopted for it called "Joule's equivalent." It is now as generally recognized as the unit of work called a horse-power, which means 33,000 lbs. lifted one foot high in a minute. The unit of heat means that one degree of heat imparted to one pound of water, is equal to 772 pounds lifted one foot, and called a "foot-pound."

Heat is considered equivalent to motive power and physical energy. Bodies possess physical energy in proportion to their specific heat. Thus a piece of steel containing a small amount of heat is a solid, but when the heat is greatly increased, the energy is exhibited in the power it possesses of reducing the steel to a fluid condition, when it may be moulded into any form. Water also possesses physical energy in proportion to its heat, and when it is supplied with a sufficient quantity it exhibits its power in changing it from a fluid to an expansive vapour—steam. There is, therefore, more physical energy in a pound weight of the vapour than in the same quantity of heated water.

Professor Macquorne Rankine, LL.D., of Glasgow, has lately published a table setting forth the energy of water heated from 212 deg. to 428 deg. Fah. At the temperature of boiling water, the energy is set down at zero, atmospheric pressure; at 820 deg. of Fah., one pound of water is stated to possess an energy equal to 6,052 foot-pounds, and a velocity of 624 feet per second; at 428 deg. E., it has an energy of 22,156 lbs., and a velocity of 1,194 feet per second. That is, the amount of energy in a pound of water heated to 428 deg., will give a projectile weighing one pound such a velocity.

In allusion to this energy of heated water, Professor Rankine says:

"It is worthy of remark that the energy depends solely on the specific heat of the substance in which

liquid state, and the initial and final temperatures, and not on any other physical property of the substance."

He does not mean to convey the idea that, by heating one pound of water to 429 deg. Fah.; for example, in a gun loaded with a pound shot, that the ball will be projected 22,156 feet—over four miles—with a velocity of 1,196 feet per second, and yet, from the brevity of his statements, such an impression is conveyed.

Motive power, or mechanical work, is based upon the physical properties of substances, as well as their specific heat. An agent possessing the physical properties of gas, or a liquid, like water, capable of conversion into an expansive vapour, must be selected for the purpose of transferring the energy of heat economically to drive machinery. Molten steel might be heated to 10,000 deg., yet it could not be employed to drive a piston or discharge a projectile from a gun. It is the steam, not the boiling water in a steam-boiler, that moves the piston of the engine, and drives the machinery.

DEVIATIONS OF THE COMPASS.

The *Revue Maritime et Coloniale* publishes a letter on the deviations to which the needle is liable in consequence of the substitution of iron for wood in ships. One of the latest contrivances for diminishing this serious inconvenience is the correcting compass, which affords the means of taking the sun's position, whereby the deviations may be corrected.

It has sometimes been supposed that fogs and certain other states of the atmosphere could influence the needle, but this has not been borne out by observation. Lightning alone exercises a decided influence on the needle, by reversing its points, so that north becomes south, and conversely. When a vessel is nearing land, the needle is said to be affected, and certain rocks there are that exercise a decided influence on the compass, volcanic rocks especially, but this influence is not felt on board ships. But the action of the iron framing on the ship's sides is far different; nothing, not even the interposition of a thick non-magnetic body, will stop its influence; far less, as some have believed, a copper coating or thick paint. But the real danger proceeds from another source, since the ship herself, under her weight of canvas, may increase the deviation of the needle.

From experiments made on board an iron-built sailing vessel, provided with iron rigging and lower yards of steel, and with two binnacle compasses on her poop, and a third placed between the mizen and mainmast, the lower part of which was all iron, the deviations of the needle were respectively 56 deg., 24 deg. and 36 deg.

Without entering into further details on this matter, the writer of the article concludes with condemning the imprudence of those who freight an iron vessel, before she has been at sea for a considerable time, in order to ascertain how her compass behaves. Moreover, a captain undertaking the command of an iron ship, should be called upon to show that he has previously been on board such a vessel on a long voyage, so that he may know how to deal with the deviations observable on board the vessel to be commanded.

THE PRODUCTION OF CAST STEEL DIRECTLY FROM PIG-IRON.

NONE of the papers seem to have noticed the attempts of Cazanave to obtain cast steel directly from pig-iron. The idea itself appears to be very ingenious, but of course the question is whether it is applicable in practice.

The foundation of this new method is the influence of steam on a thin stream of pig-iron. If we take an iron tube of a certain diameter with sides of the necessary strength, form a ring out of it, and fix on its circumference, towards the centre, three or more tubes, we have a tube ring with three or more radii. The radius is made fast to the tubular pipe; the ends of these tubes, which are open, do not quite reach to the centre of the ring, and have, therefore, between the ends an empty space, in which the pig-iron is allowed to flow in a stream of a certain strength. The stream led into the boiler from the tubular pipe flows out of the openings of the three tubes, and operates directly upon the pig iron.

It is said that the oxygen of the steam oxidizes the carbon of the pig iron, the silicium, a portion of sulphur, phosphorus, and other impurities in the pig-iron; the hydrogen combines with the carbon, sulphur, phosphorus, arsenic, and other bodies, with which it forms combinations of hydrogen. The carbonized and purified metal falls into a crucible or other vessel placed immediately under the apparatus. The metal obtained contains impurities, and must, therefore, be smelted in crucibles in a blast or reverberatory furnace. This is the essential part of the process: the simplicity of the method and the cheapness of the product are evident.

Now arise the questions:—Is it possible to obtain

steel in large quantities by this method; will it be of the same quality as the small quantity obtained on trial; and, if it is possible, at what price can it be obtained?

In answer to these questions, Cazanave asserts that by this method steel can be obtained in great quantities, not inferior to the best steel, and proportionately cheaper; for his best quality of steel can be obtained for £18 per ton. This is difficult to believe, but the inventor affirms that it is so, and at the same time warrants the excellent quality of his steel.

In the present method of obtaining steel, good iron must be used, which is cemented, and the cemented iron, that is the steel, is smelted in crucibles. By Cazanave's method cementation of the iron is avoided, so that the cast steel may be obtained in unlimited quantities. If this new method turns out practicable, it will be possible to work up the whole daily production of a blast furnace into steel.

For this only the apparatus is required, which is not very costly, and which would be erected near the blast furnace and stream of pig-iron. The stream would be divided into rays of the necessary strength, and each one directed into an apparatus.

By Bessemer's process about ten tons of steel are obtained per day at Sheffield; while by Cazanave's method sixty and seventy tons per day could be obtained, and a blast furnace is being erected at Charleroi which will produce about seventy-four tons per day. The samples of steel furnished by this new process are reported to be very good. They were obtained from pig-iron smelted with coke, but it is supposed that charcoal pig-iron would give better results.

COFFEE AND THE PROLONGATION OF LIFE.

In the days of the old alchemists, a notion prevailed that some substance could be obtained in nature that would prolong human life and render man almost immortal. For many years sages and dupes searched for the "elixir of life," and when whisky was discovered, it was hailed as the grand desideratum and called *aqua vitae*; but alas it has turned out to be the water of death far too many erring mortals. The elixir of life, however, is still an enamoured topic, and Louis Figuier, a French author, has lately published an article in *L'Année Scientifique*, in which he advances the claims of coffee as a means of prolonging human life. With respect to its beneficial influences he cites facts in proof of his position.

Quoting Dr. Petit, of Château Thierry, on the subject, he says:

"Let us transport ourselves to the frontiers of the Department du Nord, to the coal mines of Charleroi, there where thousands of men are buried every day for twelve hours in the bowels of the earth for the purpose of extracting the enormous masses of coal required for feeding the furnaces of our factories. We there see vigorous workmen, whose exterior indicates robust health, and the greatest muscular development, and yet their food is neither substantial nor abundant; three or four cups of coffee a day and potatoes, and one pound of meat in the week, is all the nourishment supplied to the workmen in the coal pits of Charleroi.

"These men can live on one-quarter of the food that is necessary to keep up the force of other individuals. In the neighbourhood of Riesen-Berg, in Bohemia, in the midst of the Krapack mountains, there exists a race of poor people who almost all follow the trade of weavers. For years their food had been altogether insufficient, being composed solely of potatoes; they were reduced to such a state of wretchedness as to become to some extent degenerate. Fortunately the medical men of the country conceived the idea of placing them under a course of coffee. The trial succeeded beyond all expectation, and the weavers of Riesen-Berg have no longer cause to envy the health and strength of the workmen of other countries.

"For the purpose of facilitating the acquisition of that salutary substance by the poor mountaineers, the Austrian Government has recently abolished the duties that used to be levied on the importation of coffee.

"Coffee," says M. de Gasparin, "renders the elements of our organism more stable. It is observed that, under the influence of coffee, the produce of the secretions is more fluid, the respiration less active, and consequently, the loss undergone by the absorbed substances less rapid. A diminution of animal heat has even been observed under similar circumstances. This last consequence helps us to understand the utility of coffee in hot countries; where the temperature is so difficult to bear that it seems to wear out the springs of life."

"Our military and naval authorities have made coffee form a part of the rations of our soldiers and sailors on active service, and have reason to be satisfied with the result. The use of coffee has been of immense benefit to our troops, as well in the African deserts as in the Crimea, in Italy and in China; the crews of our fleets

have also derived the same hygienic advantages. It is of infinite value to our soldiers in Mexico, and principally in the Sierra Caliente, at Vera Cruz, that hot-bed of yellow fever.

"As man advances in life, the bony tissue diminishes in quantity. We know, for instance, how easily the bones of old people are fractured. This accident is consequent on the slight resistance offered by the bone, which becomes weakened by the diminution of the organs. Now, to point out the consequences of this disappearance of the bony substances in persons of advanced age. The phosphoric particles of the bones are absorbed, carried away in the circulating torrent, and the molecules, thus moved along by the blood, end by obliterating the small blood-vessels or capillary tubes.

"One of our learned professors of the Faculty of Medicine, M. C. Robin, promulgated the idea of dissolving the phosphal deposits by means of a chemical agent; with lactic acid, for instance, it might be possible perhaps to prevent this obstruction of the vessels, which is the frequent cause of fatal congestions in the case of old people, and thus to extend the limits of human life. M. Petit is of opinion that it is better to prevent the obstruction of the vessels than to have to combat it, when once in existence. From the well-established fact that coffee retards the movement of the decomposition of the organs, M. Petit concludes that by its habitual use the life of man might be prolonged beyond its common duration."

He therefore recommends the use of coffee, especially to old persons, asserting that those who have reached the age of fifty years and upwards may take from one to four cups per day of moderately strong infusion, according to the habit of the body of each individual. Dr. Petit, a French physician, recommends it as an effective agent for rendering the products of the secretions more aqueous, and for combating gout, gravel and calculous affections. In Eastern countries, where the consumption of coffee is very great, such complaints are almost unknown.

HINTS FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE.

"Look always upon life and use it as a thing that is lent you," for "A wrong judgment of things is the most mischievous thing in the world," and "He that acts without consideration will often have cause to repent;" therefore, "Deliberate long on what you can do but once!" but "When you are sure you are right go on." "For take heed will surely speed." Recollect that "Labour is the mother of health," and "Industry is a man's right hand and frugality his left," and the combined exertion of these things "Comfort, plenty and respect;" in fact, "Time, patience and industry are the three grand masters of the world."

But, after all, we must not depend too much on our own industry and frugality, for "The life of man is a winter's journey," we must not expect our path to be always smooth and bright, yet often "The darkest cloud has a silver lining," and what are called misfortunes are "Blessings in disguise," yea, "Crosses are ladders that lead up to heaven;" while, on the other hand, "The worst of losses is never to have had any." "A great fortune has often made a young man poor," for "Prosperity lets go the bride." Besides, "Riches are but the baggage of virtue," and "Money, though it is a good servant, is a bad master."

Moreover it is well to recollect that "the indifference to riches makes a man more truly great than the possession of them;" in fact, "He is wealthy who is contented," for "Great men's desires are not their greatest blessings," and "It is not poverty, but discontent, that is man's worst evil;" and, surely, if men would give "Anything for a quiet life," then, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and contention therewith." Besides, we know that "The best instructed have the best portion;" and, further, that "A good reputation is half an estate."

Then "Do well and have well." But as "The best duty in the world is to live above it," say to pleasure, "Gentle Eve, I will have none of your fruit," for it is certain, "That he who most studies pleasure wants it most;" therefore, reverse the order of procedure, and "Fly pleasure and she will follow you."

Don't be suspicious, for "Suspicion is the virtue of a coward," yet as "Ill will never said well," you are by no means sure of her favour: but, remember that "Some evils are best cured by silent contempt," and "Living like Christians, is the best way to confound our enemies." Sometimes, however, "The safest remedy against an evil man is to keep at a distance from him;" for in this, as in most other cases, "Of little meddling comes great ease."

Be courteous; "Manners makes the man," and "Civility costs nothing, but it is worth a great deal."

"Honey catches more flies than vinegar." Besides, "Soft words compose hard arguments," therefore, "Set good against evil," and "Take care to be what thou wouldst seem to be;" for be assured that "Craft brings nothing home in the long run," and in this respect, as in every other, "Honesty is the best policy."

"Owe no man anything;" "Better go to bed supperless than rise in debt;" indeed, "Out of debt is out of danger." And, further, as "Good counsel breaks no man's head," I would say, "Reprove others, but correct thyself;" for "If every one would mend one all would be mended."

"Be just and firm of purpose," "Inconstancy is the attendant of a weak mind," "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Remember also that "Great concerns oft turn on a little pin;" and that "One foolish act may undo a man, but a timely one may make his fortune."

Finally, keep in mind the fact that "Though life is short, he lives long enough who has lived well," and "He that lives well looks before him." The advantages of living well are too numerous for reference, but I will mention one, it is that—"A good life keeps off wrinkles."

GERMAN ECONOMY.

A LATE tourist in Germany describes the economy practised by the peasants as follows:—Each German has his house, his orchard, his roadside trees so laden with fruit that did he not carefully prop them up and tie them together, and in many places hold the boughs together by wooden clamps, they would be torn asunder by their own weight. He has his corn plot, his plot for mangel wurzel or hay, for potatoes, for hemp, &c. He is his own master, and therefore he and his family have the strongest motive for exertion.

You see the effect of this in his industry and economy. In Germany nothing is lost. The produce of the trees and cows is carried to market. Much fruit is dried for winter use. You see wooden trays of plums, cherries and sliced apples lying in the sun to dry. You see strings of them hanging from the windows in the sun. The cows are kept up the greater part of the year, and every green thing is collected for them.

Every little nook where the grass grows, by the roadside river and brook, is carefully cut by the sickle, and carried home, on the heads of women and children in baskets, or tied in large cloths. Nothing of the kind is lost that can possibly be made of any use. Weeds, nettles, nay the very goose-grass which covers the waste places, is cut up and taken for the cows. You see the little children standing in the streets of the villages, and in the streams which generally run down them, busy washing these weeds before they are given to the cattle. They carefully collect the leaves of the marsh-grass, carefully cut their potato-tops for them, and even, if other things fail, gather green leaves from the woodlands.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

HOW TO GROW PEACHES EVERY YEAR.—The following, by a correspondent, is worthy a trial by all lovers of delicious fruit:—"Procure your trees grafted upon the wild-plum stock. The tree partakes of the nature of the plum, being hardy, and will never winter kill, and putting out late in the spring, will never be injured by the frost. It is a certain preventative against the workings of the peach grub, while the natural lifetime of the tree is beyond that of our own; so that you may depend upon peaches every year, and for a long period of time, without the destructive and discouraging influences attending the growth of the common peach."

CURE FOR CORNS.—A correspondent sends the following, which he regards as an infallible cure, having tried it himself with complete success:—"Pare the corn as close as you can, then get a thin piece of india-rubber cloth, about the 20th of an inch thick (the pure india-rubber is the best, but that made of cotton will do), and where the corn is on one of the toes make a stall of it, or where it is on another part of the foot sew it on the inside of the stocking and large enough to cover the corn well. By continuing the application from four to six weeks and paring the corn as the callous skin loosens, the corn will disappear. The application of the rubber will give immediate relief to the pain. The principle of that cure is to assist nature in restoring the skin to its natural condition again."

HOW TO GET SLEEP.—How to get sleep is to some persons a matter of high importance. Nervous persons who are troubled with wakefulness and excitability, usually have a strong tendency of blood to the brain with cold extremities. The pressure of blood on the brain keeps it in a stimulated or wakeful state, and the pulsations in the head are often painful. Let

such rise and chafe the body and extremities with a brush or towel, or rub smartly with the hands to promote circulation and withdraw the excessive amount of blood from the brain, and they will fall asleep in a few moments. A cold bath, or a sponge bath and rubbing, or a good run, or a rapid walk in the open air, or going up and down stairs a few times just before retiring, will aid in equalizing circulation and promoting sleep. These rules are simple and easy of application in castle or cabin, and may minister to the comfort of thousands who would freely expend money for an anodyne to promote, "Nature's sweet restorer, balm sleep."

STATISTICS.

THE stock of coffee in the chief ports of Europe, on November 1, was 55,900 tons against 49,750 tons in 1862, and 38,100 tons in 1861. The crop of Ceylon, year ending September 30, 1863, yielded 39,170 tons against 29,256 tons in 1862, 29,700 tons in 1861, 31,552 tons in 1860, 29,228 tons in 1859; or average, 31,781 tons for the last five years.

THE official export list of Port wines shipped over the Bar of Oporto during the year 1863 shows a total of 34,905 pipes, of which 30,044 came to England. The eight largest shippers were—Sandeman and Co., 3,438 pipes; Cockburn, Smiths, and Co., 2,304 pipes; Martinez, Gassiot, and Co., 2,188 pipes; Offley and Cramp, 1,757 pipes; Ode and Baker, 1,510 pipes; Graham and Co., 1,374 pipes; Hooper Brothers, 1,224 pipes; and Croft and Co., 1,178 pipes.

OCEAN WAVES.

GREAT exaggeration has prevailed in respect to the altitude of ocean waves. Even learned writers, until very recently, continued to speak of their rising forty or fifty feet high.

In November, 1840, I encountered, during a voyage from New York to Barbadoes, in a small barque, one of the severest hurricanes of the present century. It was one of those great cycloidal storms, reported on by the late Colonel Reid, which swept down the whole length of the Caribbean Sea, and, turning with the Gulf Stream, followed the coast of North America to Newfoundland, and finally crossed the Atlantic to the shores of England.

Owing to the ignorance and stupidity of the captain, we received the whole force of the storm for four days, almost under bare poles, when, by changing the course of his ship, he might have run out of it in a few hours, as I endeavoured in vain to convince him.

When we reached the middle of the Gulf Stream, where the current was three knots an hour, off the Capes of Carolina, we had the wind at its greatest force from the north, almost in an opposite direction to the current, thus raising the waves to what people delight to call, in poetic language, "mountain high."

Being a good sailor, I mounted the mast to get a better view of the terrible desolation which surrounded our little barque, and to measure the height of the waves. I was quite surprised, when I mounted about thirty feet, to find that I was on a level with the crest of the waves when the ship was at the bottom of the "troughs." I therefore arrived at the conclusion that they never rise above sixteen or eighteen feet above the ocean's level when at rest.

The violence of the waves was such (as we found when we came into port) that nearly one-third of the copper was torn from the ship's sides and bottom.—*Wilson's Science of Shipbuilding.*

GOING TO LAW.—It is one of the most remarkable things in this world's history, that a member of the bar is very rarely engaged in a lawsuit. Lawyers know too well the absurdities and annoyances of their favourite science to allow themselves to be dragged into its vortex. They know too well the vexations and uselessness of suits to ever try their own remedies. A physician cannot cure himself, the proverb says, and so he is careful not to get sick. A lawyer cannot cure his own ills, and so he keeps out of them.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S CHRISTENING.—The very christening of this little lady looks now like a gorgeous dance of Death. Nearly all the noblemen who figured officially at it came to as violent an end as the baby's mother; or were otherwise gloomily distinguished. Essex, who carried the basons, was the last of the earls of the line of Bourchier. Exeter, who carried the wax, the first marquis of the house of Courtenay, was beheaded. Dorset, who bore the salt—the Grey who, like the King, repudiated his first wife, Catherine Fitz-Alan, and by King Henry's niece, became the father of Lady Jane Grey—also passed under the axe. Lord Rochford, a graceful rhymist and a clever sonneteer, and Lord Hussey, who swelled the train, tasted soon after of the scaffold and the sawdust. Cranmer, the young princess's god-

father, came to a more painful end by fire; while the Earl of Wiltshire, worse than submitting to the headman himself, saw his son undergo that bloody submission; and the Earl of Derby, luckiest man of this awfully splendid group, came off with no worse fortune than having a daughter married to the Lord Stourton who was hanged!—*Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne, by the Duke of Manchester.*

FACETIÆ.

If an elephant can travel eight miles an hour, and carry his trunk, how fast could he go if he had a little page to carry it for him?

A GOOD REASON.—A lady was asked, the other day, why she chose to live a single life, and gravely replied: "I am not able to support a husband."

THE CAUSE OF MR. JUSTICE SHEE being unable to take his seat on the 11th inst. turns out to have been the very promise one that his tailor was not ready with his robes.

A SOFT ANSWER.—"A soft answer turneth away wrath," as the woman said when she quarrelled with her husband, and threw a bag of feathers on his new Sunday suit.

REALLY NECESSARY LINES.

The following are amongst the railway schemes for which application might as well be made by various companies to obtain the sanction of Parliament:

The General Exhibition Railway, from Madame Tussaud's to the Tower, with branches to St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, the other principal buildings, the theatres, and all places of public amusement.

A railway from Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, to the Temple, and the different Inns of Court, to be called the Cheshire Cheese Railway.

A line from Bartlett's Buildings, Holborn, to Hatton Garden.

A line extending from the Royal Exchange, Cornhill, to the Bank.

The Monument and London Bridge Junction Railway.

A line connecting London Stone with Aldgate Pump.—*Punch.*

SWITCHED OFF.—"Boys," said a village pedagogue, the other day, "what is the meaning of all that noise in the school?" "It's Bill Sykes, sir, who is all the time imitating a locomotive." "Come up here, William, if you are turned into a locomotive, it is high time you were switched off."

THE FRONT STAIRS.—The great Chancery lawyer, Trevor, among his other qualities, was a great lover of economy. He had dined by himself one day, at the Rolls, and was drinking his wine, when his cousin Roderic was unexpectedly introduced by a side-door. "You rascal!" exclaimed Trevor to his servant, "have you brought my cousin Roderic Lloyd, prebendary of North Wales, marshal to Baron Price, and a hundred grand things, up my back-stairs? Take him instantly down my back-stairs, and bring him up my front-stairs." In vain Roderic remonstrated; and while he was being conveyed down the back and up the front his honour removed the bottle and glasses.

CHANGE AGAINST A CONGREGATION.—One Sunday lately the minister of a large congregation in Dundee was interrupted in the course of his forenoon sermon by the repeated coughing of his auditors. Pausing in the midst of his observations, he addressed his congregation to the following effect: "You go about the street at the New Year time—you get drunk and get cold, then you come here and cough, cough, like a park of artillery. I think I must give you a vacation of six weeks, that you may have time to get sober and to regain your health again." He thereafter went on with his discourse, which concluded amid much greater quiet than it had begun; but just as the congregation were dismissing, an indignant seat-holder in the gallery rose up and loudly declared that the remarks of the pastor were nothing less than an insult to the whole congregation.

EXTRAORDINARY SCENE AT A SALE.—The furniture and stock-in-trade of a well-known dealer in second-hand clothes, in Newcastle, were distrained the other day for rent, and a respectable auctioneer made his appearance to conduct the sale, when the mistress of the house thus addressed him, in presence of a crowd of Castle Garth tailors who had flocked thither to buy:—"Now, Mr.—, you are come to take my few things, and to rifle this house, which has been a place where souls have been saved—a house of prayer—a Bethel, where God has met his chosen ones." "Well, Mrs. R.—, I'm very sorry. It's an unpleasant thing for me. I'd rather not have been here this morning." "I have one request to make, then, and that is, that before we commence we shall

all kneel down and ask the Divine blessing on what you are about to do. It is a good opportunity; there have never been so many precious souls in this room before." "Oh dear, no; there's nobody here has time for anything of the sort. You really must excuse us." "No, but I'll not excuse you." So the lady went down on her knees. The auctioneer and tailors took off their hats as reverently as they could. Poor Mrs. R.— poured forth a current of supplications, fervently and eloquently, and emphatically to the point. Her involuntary hearers were awe-struck. When she rose from her knees all the auctioneer said was, "I hope, gentlemen, none of you, after this, will bid against Mrs. R.— for anything she may want to buy in for herself." And neither did they; for—proclaim it on the Castle Garth Stairs, where Mammon may have been hastily presumed by us to reign supreme—she was allowed to buy everything in at her own price, and that, moreover, as she afterwards observed to a friend, "in faith," for she had not half-a-crown in her pocket.

WHAT MAKES A WOMAN HAPPY.—A lady made a call upon a friend who had lately been married. When her husband came home to dinner she said, "I have been to see Mrs. Smith." "Well," replied the husband, "I suppose she is very happy." "Happy! I should think she ought to be—she has a camel's-hair shawl two-thirds border."

A "BROWN" TOAST.—Dr. Brown, chaplain to the Bishop of Hereford, dining one day with his lordship, in company with a young lady to whom he paid his addresses, was asked for his toast after dinner; when the bishop, perceiving him to hesitate, cried, "Oh, I beg your pardon, doctor, your toast is not yet Brown."

"AS HE HAS MADE HIS BED."

"Uneasy lies"—so Shakespeare wrote, "The head that wears a crown";

But not than average mal-aise
Makes Prussia's monarch frown,

Who finds his bed stuffed full of thorns,
In shape of Eider-down

—*Punch.*

USELESS ARTICLES.—A poor old woman called recently upon a weaver in Glenclue, Scotland, who, besides his usual trade, enacted the part of a dentist. After extracting her tooth, the old lady regretted she could not reward the doctor with the usual fee, stating as a reason that the "Poor Board allowed her only a shilling a week." "Indeed!" said the weaver dentist, "if that's a' ye get, gudewife, ye might jost as weel sit down again an' let every tooth in yer head be pu'd out, for ye hae sma' occasion for any of them, at that rate!"

MRS. FRY AND HER BOARDERS.

"Le me, Mr. Higgins!" ejaculated Mrs. Fry, the mistress of a boarding-house, one day at table, "why don't you eat something? You don't eat enough to keep a bird alive. It's my opinion that if you were to quit smoking you would have a better appetite. Now, when my poor, dear, departed husband was—"

"Pardon me, madam," interrupted Higgins, rising from the table, "a particular engagement prevents my remaining longer. I certainly shall leave off using the weed, for I am confident that it injures me."

[One month later. Scene, breakfast-table at Mrs. Fry's boarding-house. Higgins passes his cup the fourth time for coffee, helps himself to the sixth slice of bread, and fourth out of steak. Mrs. Fry looks on in dismay, and moves uneasily in her chair.]

"I must say, Mr. Higgins, that since you have quit using tobacco, your appetite has taken a very remarkable turn. Excuse me for speaking of it before the company, but I shall expect you hereafter to pay five shillings more per week for your board."

Higgins, helping himself to another slice of the bread, and passing his cup to the servant, replied: "Can't afford it, madam. Salary small—expenses heavy—in debt—really couldn't think of it."

Mrs. Fry jerked at her cap-strings and replied: "Well, then, sir, you will have to go to smoking again, for I haven't had a bit of stale bread in the house since."

GEORGE III. AND HIS WINE MERCHANT.—Mr. Carbonell, the wine merchant, was a favourite with George III., and used to be admitted to the Royal hunt. Returning one day from the chase his Majesty affably entered into conversation with his wine merchant, and rode a considerable way *à la suite* with him. Lord Walsingham was in attendance, and, watching his opportunity, he took Mr. Carbonell aside, and whispered to him. "What's that? what's that," said the king, "Walsingham has been saying to you?" "Please, sire, I am told I have been guilty of unintentional disrespect; my lord has just informed me that I ought to have taken off my hat whenever I addressed your Majesty; but your Majesty will please to observe that whenever I hunt my hat is fastened to my wig, and my wig is fastened to my head, and

I am riding a very high-spirited horse; so that anything goes off we must all go together." The king laughed heartily at this whimsical apology, which he good-naturedly accepted, and continued to chat with Mr. Carbonell without endangering his falling off his horse.

THE BARBER'S "LITTLE STRANGER."—A hairdresser in Camden Town, who had the pride and privilege of becoming a "patient" on the 9th inst., is so elated by the similarity of the circumstances under which his son and that of the Prince of Wales made their appearance, almost contemporaneously into this sinful world, that he has published the full particulars in the following paragraph:—"On the 9th inst., at 2, Prince of Wales Crescent, Prince of Wales Road, N.W., at 4 a.m., the wife of Mr. James Thomas Rhodes, hairdresser, &c. (who was married on the 10th of March, 1863), of a son."

A FACT.—In a not distant city, the wife of one of the City Fathers presented her husband with three children at a birth. The delighted father took his little daughter, four years of age, to see her new relations. She looked at the diminutive little beings a few moments, when, turning to her father, she inquired: "Pa, which are you going to keep?"

THE DIFFERENCE OF A LETTER.—The admiralty hydrographer was recently sent from Paris to Rome with a letter for the mayor to accompany him everywhere in the river. The mayor took it literally, and the next morning, at the appointed spot and hour of five, appeared in nature's costume and with swimming corks tied around his mayor's body, not being a good swimmer, stating, much to the hydrographer's astonishment, that he was ready to accompany that gentleman everywhere in the river; the difference of "on" and "in" being the cause of this comic scene, told by the Paris *farceurs*.

A STRONG HINT.—"Well, father, I've left Brown for good," said a boy, as he entered the house. "What the matter, Edmund?" said the father. "Nothing particular," replied Edmund; "but Mr. Brown threw out some hints and talked so insinuating, that I couldn't stand it." "What did he say, my son?" "Why, he allowed that I robbed the money-drawers and insinuated as much as if I was a liar and a thief—and he hinted that if I did not evacuate his premises at once, he would kick me out; and so I thought I might as well come home!"

WHEN THE "BOTTOM FEEL OUT."

A correspondent tells of a soldier wounded by a shell from Fort Wagner. He was going to the rear with a mutilated arm.

"Wounded by a shell?" he was asked. "Yes," he coolly answered, "I was right under the darned thing when the bottom dropped out."

MORE SHAKESPEARIANITY.—We are happy to state that the following gentlemen have given their consent to have their names added to the National Shakespeare Committee:—Professor Holloway, Messrs. Moore and Son, Mr. Miles (sixteen shilling brown), Mr. Close, the Post, Captain Atcherley, Rev. Dr. Cumming, Mr. Cox, M.P., the Viscount Williams, Mr. Jackey Sanders, and the Beadle of the Burlington Arcade.—*Punch.*

SHAKESPEARE DISMISSED.

The wealthy mayor of a well-known town in Berkshire became patron of the theatre under Mr. M.—'s management in 1850, and gave a hundred guineas for a box for the season. The liberality did not arise from any particular taste for dramatic literature, or any other kind of literature; but he paid this handsomely for the box because he was a liberal man, liked going to the play, and his predecessor in office paid the same sum, and he would not be outdone.

He attended every night, was always pleased and very friendly with the manager, till one night Mr. M.—y made his appearance in *Hamlet*—a play the mayor had never seen; and, when in the mad scene *Hamlet* appeared with his dress in disorder, the mayor took offence at the exhibition, and declared to his wife and family, who were in the box with him, his conviction that the actor was drunk, and he would have no such doings if he could help it.

So, accordingly, he went round to the stage, and waited at the side till the end of the scene, when he thus addressed the tragedian:

"Mr. M.—y, till to-night I looked upon you as a respectable man, and now I see you are given to drink, for no sober man would go before a respectable audience with his shirt-frill hanging about like that, and his stockings down! Why, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

The tragedian, astonished at the ignorance of his patron, said:

"My dear sir, you are quite mistaken, I assure you. I only adhere to the author's instructions in respect to the disordered dress to show—"

"Who wrote this play?" demanded the mayor.

"Don't you know Shakespeare wrote it?" exclaimed M.—

"I can't say that I do," replied the mayor; "but I will take care that he writes no more for this house as long as I have anything to do with it, and so you may tell him."

BARK.—The bark of a medical tree may save one's life; the bark of a dog may save his property.

A USELESS MALEDICTION.

A clown employed to draw timber from a wood, met with an oak trunk of so large a size that the tackle he made use of to place it on the carriage broke twice. Hodge flung his hat on the ground, and scratching his head with vexation, exclaimed:

"Darn the hogs that didn't eat thee, when thee was an acorn, and then I should not have had the trouble with thee."

A ZOOLOGICAL DIFFICULTY.—A lady and gentleman, relatives of mine, were anxious to have a plover for their dinner, and gave their orders accordingly to the cook. At dinner-time a woodcock was placed on the table, and, upon their asking why it was not a plover, the cook informed them that it was a pelican. The next morning the lady called at the poultryer's, who apologized, saying that "the cook had ordered a pelican; he did not know what a pelican was, except that it was a bird with a long beak, and a woodcock was the nearest he could do to it." So much for zoology at Baywater. This is almost as good as a story told by a gentleman who had flushed a woodcock, and, on coming out of the covert, asked a ploughboy if he had seen a woodcock come out. "No, sir," says the boy: "I don't know what a woodcock is; but I seed a partridge go by with a stick in his mouth."

THE PIGS' FEET BOARDING-HOUSE.

The lady who kept the boarding-house at which I resided was ever devising some plan to keep her boarders cheap. As it was the season when pigs' feet were plenty in market and quite cheap, the old lady made it a point to have them at least twice a day—at breakfast and dinner—which was rather disagreeable to the taste of the boarders, and caused considerable grumbling among them, when out of hearing of Mrs. Blight, for, being on good terms, they regretted exceedingly to wound the old lady's feelings by any protestation against her board.

But this was not to last long. The pigs' feet came daily upon the table, and should any be left over, as was often the case, they were sure to be warmed up, and served at another meal.

One old gentleman, in particular, Mr. Hadden, noted for his piety, appeared to be very much opposed to having such diet served every meal, and it was voted that he should request Mrs. Blight to change the pigs' feet for something more palatable, which he readily consented to do at dinner.

Dinner came, and also the pigs' feet. Mr. Hadden took his seat at the foot of the table, and after looking at the pigs' feet, he commenced to say grace, of which the following is a copy, though it has never been found in a Prayer-book:

"Pigs' feet hot, pigs' feet cold,
Pigs' feet warm, pigs' feet old,
Pigs' feet stale, pigs' feet tough—
Thank us to Heaven, we've pigs' feet enough."
That was the last of the pigs' feet. Mrs. Blight took the very gentle hint, and provided something else for the boarders.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

In the reign of William Rufus, the fashion of wearing shoes with long points, turned up before and fastened to the knee with a chain, was introduced. The clergy endeavoured by preaching to abolish this ridiculous custom, but in vain.

Before the Conquest, surnames were not used in England; but the Normans adopted a second name, by way of distinction; and it usually expressed either some personal quality, as Rufus, the Red, or indicated some post at court, or was the name of the family estate, in which last case "de" was prefixed.

In the reign of Henry II., carpets were not in use, and it was considered the height of grandeur to have the floors strewn with clean straw or rushes every morning.

Cloths of arms were brought into fashion in the time of Richard I., and were adopted in order that the knights who were cased in armour might be known by the devices on their shields.

In the reign of Edward I., there were only two clocks in England; the one was placed in an old tower of Westminster Hall, the other in Canterbury Cathedral; they were both of foreign workmanship. It was not until the time of Edward III. that clocks were made in this country.

In the reign of Edward III., there were at Bristol three brothers, who were eminent clothiers and woollen-weavers, and whose family name was Blan-

ket. They were the first manufacturers of that comfortable material, which has ever since been called by their name, and which was then used for peasant's clothing.

As late as the fifteenth century, the very inelegant mode of eating with the fingers was still continued; for as yet there were no forks, even at the table of the king.

A manufactory for needles was set up in England in the reign of Elizabeth, by a native of Germany; and the first watch seen in this country was presented to the queen by a German.

The first pair of silk stockings made in England were knitted by Mrs. Montague, a silk-woman, and given to Queen Elizabeth, who was so much pleased with them, that she never again wore cloth hose.

In the same reign, the hour of dinner with people of high rank was eleven before noon; and of supper, between five and six in the afternoon. Merchants took each of their meals an hour later, and the husbandmen one hour later than the merchants.

THE PARTING.

There is a pang which friends must feel,
When doomed to part;
The gay "farewell" cannot conceal
Their grief of heart.

Full oft a friendship—scarcely known—
In parting is confessed,
By prayers of "pleasure" fondly breathed
By those who love us best.

There is a smile—a freezing smile—
We often view,
Playing around the lips of those
Who bid "adieu."

But ah! how it belies the heart,
How chilling it appears,
When dancing round the eyes of friends,
And quivering 'mid their tears.

There is a tear—full oft restrained,
By manly pride,
But which will down the conscious cheek
In secret glide.

And yet, how oft, when hearts too full
In sight to find relief,
Those soothing tears of sorrow fall,
And drown each new-born grief.

There is a balm, a parting bliss,
That friends adore,
It is the hope in future years,
They'll meet once more.

It steals within the aching breast,
Like dew along the flower;
Revives each wither'd thought therein,
And brightens life's dull hour.

F. H.

GEMS.

A FALSE friend is like the shadow on the sun-dial, appearing in sunshine but vanishing in shade.

NEVER turn a blessing round to see whether it has a dark side on it.

EVERYWHERE endeavour to be useful, and everywhere you are at home.

HAPPINESS may grow at our fireside, but is not to be picked up in our neighbour's garden.

PERFECT peace is not possible, even in the deepest retirement. A wolf will creep into the most pastoral life.

AN hour's industry will do more to produce cheerfulness, suppress evil humours, and retrieve our affairs, than a month's musing.

TRUTH AND ERROR.—Truth being founded on a rock, you may boldly dig to see its foundations; but falsehood being laid on the sand, if you proceed to examine its foundations, you cause its fall.

It cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind, that application is the price to be paid for mental acquisitions, and that it is as absurd to expect them without it, as to hope for a harvest where we had not sown a seed.

HAVE you made one happy heart to-day? Envid privilege! How calmly you can seek your pillow, how sweetly sleep! In all this world there is nothing so sweet as giving comfort to the distressed, as getting a sun-ray into a gloomy heart.

THE EYE.—A beautiful eye makes silence eloquent; a kind eye makes contradiction an assent; while an enraged eye makes beauty deformed. The eye speaks a language in which there can be no deceit; nor can a skilful observer be imposed upon by looks, even among courtiers or women.

AN EMPEROR'S DYING WORDS.—When Severus, Emperor of Rome, found his end approaching, he cried

out, "I have been everything and everything is nothing;" then, ordering the urn to be brought to him in which his ashes were to be enclosed, on his body being burned, according to the custom of the Romans, he said, "Little urn, thou shalt contain one for whom the world was too little."

THE WORLD.—The course of a rapid river is the best of all emblems to express the variableness of all our scenes below. Shakespeare says, "None ever bathed himself twice in the same stream," and it is equally true that the world upon which we close our eyes at night is never the same with that on which we open them in the morning.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It is said that the machinery of England can accomplish more than all the hands on the globe.

SPIRITUALISM IN ROME.—Mr. Mome of spiritualism notoriety, has been ordered to leave Rome in three days.

THE CITY POLICE have just added leather leggings to their uniform, and there is a talk of their wearing heavy beards.

THE NEW MEDICAL BILL.—A bill will be introduced into Parliament next session to deprive druggists of their right "to advise poor persons what to take when suffering from a slight ailment."

THE LATE PRINCE CONSORT'S TOMB.—The bronze works for the decorations of the late Prince Consort's tomb at Frogmore are being executed by the famous French firm at Barbedienne.

A YOUNG man has died at Powick, Worcestershire, and four or five others are in danger, from drinking cider made in a mill which had been repaired with lead, and in which the liquor had been left standing.

COST OF THE LATE CITY ENTERTAINMENT.—A report just issued shows that the cost of the entertainment given by the Corporation of London to the Prince and Princess of Wales was £15,054 0s. 3d.

A LARGE FAMILY.—On the 12th ult., at Backley Mill, near Rochdale, died Malley Garside, an old woman verging upon 92 years of age. She leaves 11 children, 72 grandchildren, 73 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren—a total of 158 persons.

THE TOWNLEY CASE AGAIN.—Lord Henry Gordon Lennox, M.P. for Chichester, proposed, at the very earliest moment after the meeting of Parliament, to bring forward the Townley case; not, however, confining himself to that, but to the reprieves that have been granted during a number of years.

THE EXPLOSION ON THE MERSEY.—It is stated that the explosion on board the Lotty Sleigh in the Mersey was heard at Blackley, in Worcestershire—a distance of 100 miles as the crow flies. "Its effects resembled those of the late earthquake, shaking the doors, rattling the fire-irons, &c."

MOTHER-O'-PEARL BOUQUETS.—The last novelty in the flower world is bouquets made of mother-o'-pearl, that sparkle like jewels. The pearly part of the shell is separated in strips as thin as paper, and with these layers trembling oat and wheat ears are especially well imitated.

RAILROAD AND STEAMBOAT ACCIDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES.—There were in the United States in 1853, one hundred and thirty-eight railroad accidents, sixty fires, thirty-one steamboat accidents, and one hundred and thirty vessels lost. In the above accidents there were two thousand six hundred and sixty-seven persons killed, and six hundred and fifty-four injured. There were also sixty-one executions.

THE OPERA IN 1680.

AN idea of the splendour of ancient operas may be conceived from the *mise en scene* of "Berenice," first brought on the stage in 1680. It had three choruses. The first consisted of one hundred girls, the second of one hundred knights on horseback.

In the triumphal cortege were forty huntmen with horns, sixty trumpeters on foot, six tambours, together with twenty-four other musicians, a great number of flag-bearers, pages, huntmen, grooms, etc., two lions with Turkish, and two elephants with Moorish grooms. Berenice's triumphal car was drawn by six white horses; six other carriages, for generals, were drawn by four horses each; six others, for the booty and prisoners, by twelve.

The transformation-scenes represented a forest, in which were being hunted boars, deer and bears; an endless plain, with the triumphal arches; Berenice's rooms; the royal dining saloon; a picture gallery, and the royal stables, with a hundred living horses. Toward the end a great golden globe appeared in the sky, which opened of itself, and threw out eight other blue globes, upon which sat Virtue, Generosity, Fortitude, Heroic Love, Victory, Courage, Honour and Immortality, float in mid-air and singing a chorus!

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. C.—The mines of plumbago, or black lead, are at Borrowdale, near Keswick, in Cumberland.

G. B. A.—The man to whom Pope attributed "every virtue under heaven," was Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne.

BRADFORD.—Copying ink is the same as common ink, with the addition of gum arabic.

D. F.—The equator is ninety degrees from each pole.

RICHARD STORRY.—No; the Medway has its source in Surrey and Sussex, and falls into the Nore at Sheerness.

F. A. R.—Truth cannot die; it passes from mind to mind, imparting light in its progress, and constantly renewing its own brightness during the diffusion.

HENRY BRIGHT.—Give it up. There are no keys that sooner open the door of death than whisky and brandy.

P. S.—There are two ways of gaining a reputation—by being praised by honest men, or abused by rogues.

A. ROSE.—Never either caress or contend with your wife in the presence of strangers; the one is folly, and the other madness.

Q.—The obliteration of the impression on gold coins is not always a sign of diminution of weight; the supposed abrasion of the prominent parts is, in fact, merely a depression of those parts into the mass, bringing them to a level with the rest.

"SWEET TOOTH."—The nutritive properties of sugar are generally much underrated. It has been maintained that it affords, in a given quantity of matter, the greatest amount of nourishment of any production in nature.

M. T. C.—"Sound sleep" is usually considered a healthy state of repose; but it is an observation of Dr. Wilson Philip that no sleep is healthy but that from which we are easily awakened.

ROLAND HERNIMAN.—The brain is insensible. Reason on it as we may, the fact is so. The brain, through which every impression must be conveyed before it is perceived, is itself insensible; and has no more consciousness than the leather of our shoe.

EMMIE, who is seventeen years of age, and whose claims to beauty may be admitted, when she is "said to resemble the Princess of Wales," is desirous to abandon her state of single blessedness for bliss matrimonial. She has £500 a year; and the gentleman should have a corresponding income.

T. B. W.—All fish brought to London is sold in the first instance in Billingsgate Market, and the saleman of that market have privileges really equivalent to a monopoly. They thus regulate both the supply and the price to the public; and we agree with you that this is an abuse of privilege which ought to be abolished.

ARTHUR IRVING has an income of £400 a year, and is anxious for a wife with whom to share it. He is a commercial traveller, a linguist, and otherwise accomplished; 5 ft. 10 in. in height, and of a dark complexion. Any young "lady" who would be content to stay at home "would suit him; and he would make his wife a separate settlement.

J. KING.—1. Apply to the captain on board, or the caterer of the officers' mess. 2. A knowledge of butler's duties is necessary; for captain's steward, a knowledge of valet's duties as well. 3. Study the author's meaning well, and you will be sure to read him well; you can do this better in private.

LOWEY ONE, in reply to "Lancashire Reader," says she is 5 ft. with brown hair, blue eyes; is not handsome, but very genteel; thoroughly domesticated and very industrious. All she has to offer is a kind and loving heart for a good husband and peaceful home.

NORA.—There are diversities of what is called temper. We speak of one person as of a gloomy, and of another of a cheerful disposition, and avoid instinctively the one, but seek the company of the other. To the cheerful, almost everything is a source of cheerfulness. In the darkness of the storm the cloud which hides the sunshine from their eyes, does not hide it from their hearts; while to the sullen, no sky is bright and no scene is fair.

MAGGIE says she would like to correspond with a young man of temperate habits, who must also be religious, and have a good salary. "Maggie" is pretty, tall, and stout, has blue eyes, brown hair, and good features; can work well, and is not proud; has no money, but a loving heart, and a good disposition, combined with a pleasing manner; age 19. Although "Maggie" may not have gold, it will be seen that she possesses a goodly catalogue of graces.

A HUSBAND complains that he constantly hears this exclamation from his wife—"Don't put on your left stocking to-morrow morning. I must first mend a hole in it." It may console him to learn that no less a philosopher than Jean Paul Richter has said that he has "often gone nearly out of his mind by such like unfeminine utterances." But "A Husband" should remember that "he who marries a wife and he who goes to war, must submit to everything that may happen."

DETECTIVE.—Nothing can be more absurd than the idea that looking guilty proves guilt. An honest man charged with crime is much more likely to blush at the accusation than the real offender, who is generally prepared for the

event, and has his face ready-made for the occasion. The very thought of being suspected of anything criminal will bring the blood to an innocent man's cheek in nine cases out of ten. The most guilty-looking person we ever saw was a man arrested for stealing a horse, which turned out to be his own property.

A MAN.—Our advice is, to have the courage to wear your old clothes until you are in a condition to pay for new ones.

T. MACDONALD.—Look Ness, in Inverness-shire, never freezes. The reason is supposed to arise from its great depth, it being in the middle from 60 to 135 fathoms deep.

FRANCIS MILROY.—Cape Clear is not on the mainland, although it is the most southerly point of Ireland. It is on an island of the same name.

S. G.—No; in love we rarely, if ever, think of moral qualities, and hardly ever of intellectual ones. Temperament and manner, with beauty, are the common excitements of love.

X. Y. Z.—The foundation of the British Museum was formed by the collection of curiosities of Sir Hans Sloane, the naturalist.

INQUIRE.—The House of Tudor commences with the reign of Henry VII.; and the beautiful Gothic building to which you allude, at the east end of Westminster Abbey, although begun in his reign, was not completed till the reign of Henry VIII.

DOLORS has lost her peace of mind; she "wishes not to think of anything, and knows she would not feel the affliction if she could banish the thought, yet she hardly thinks of anything else." It is a not uncommon case; the passions call away the thoughts with incessant importunity, especially that of love; and the cure in "Dolors' case," if not hopeless, must be left to time. Thus Shakespeare wrote:

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?

Fluck from the memory a rooted sorrow?

Raze out the written troubles of the brain?

And with some sweet oblivious antidote,

Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff

That weighs upon the heart?"

ELIZA Y.—We have no sympathy for you; on your own showing you had "only a suspicion," to guide you in the course which you have taken.

ELIZA M. would be delighted to correspond with "Londini." She is just seventeen, with dark curly hair, brown eyes and fair complexion, and is about 5 ft. in height.

TRUE DANISH GIRL thinks she could make "Miserable Charlie" a loving and industrious wife. She is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, brilliant dark eyes and auburn hair, fair complexion, and seventeen years of age.

T. S. S.—We are to a certain extent insensible of the stores existing in the memory until any portion of them is recalled. If this were otherwise, the whole—bad and good—would always be present to the mind; which, if possible, would obviously be highly inconvenient. When Simonides offered to teach Themistocles the art of memory, the latter wisely replied: "Rather teach me the art of forgetting."

A LANCASHIRE.—The effect of proximity or distance in awakening our sympathies is very great. For instance we peruse with only momentary emotion the narrative of a city tumbled into ruins and thousands of lives lost in South America; but an explosion at home like that of the ship *Loty Sleigh* in the Mersey affords a subject of conversation for days.

MENKIE L. is a love-lorn maiden, who intimates that she desires to be forthwith wooed and wed. She would like a tall gentleman, with light hair, and who must wear a moustache. He must be musical, fond of reading, and, above all, good-tempered and kind-hearted. The lady is short (she says unfortunately), has dark hair, grey eyes, and possesses a small fortune.

MARIA.—The lady is before the public, and it would be indecorous to describe her personal attractions, unless we gave her portrait. But what does Byron, a great authority on female beauty, say?—

"Who hath not proved how feebly words essay

To fix one spark of beauty's heavenly ray?

Who doth not feel, until his falling sight

Faints into dimness with its own delight,

His changing cheek, his sinking knee confess

The might—the majesty of loveliness?"

DAVID.—Sometimes hair makes its appearance where it is not wanted; as on moles. These can only be got rid of by a surgical operation; and the removal may be effected without difficulty or danger, or leaving a mark behind. We condemn the practice of using depilatories, or hair-destructors; they only remove what is above the surface, and being made up of quicklime, soda and a preparation of arsenic, there is a great liability of injury to the skin. The proper mode of getting rid of such hairs, or of those that grow out of their true line, in the eyebrows or eyelashes, is to take patience and pluck them out.

R. H.—It is a question for a lawyer, with all the facts before him; but generally after the lapse of upwards of sixty years, the possession of no kind of property can be recovered, however just the title may be.

H.—The influence of a considerate, indulgent and forgiving wife over her husband is such that, when she has once made him acquainted with her good qualities, by an early practical display of them, he will never want a will of his own in opposition to hers—however much he may at first, naturally have been induced to assert it.

D.—Since the union with Scotland the title of the Prince of Wales has been "Prince of Great Britain, but ordinarily created Prince of Wales;" and, as eldest son to the King or Queen Regnant of England, he is Duke of Cornwall from his birth, an likewise Duke of Rothesay, and Seneschal of Scotland. The younger sons of sovereigns of England are, by courtesy, styled princes by birth, as are all their daughters princesses, and the title of "Royal Highness" is given to all the monarch's children, whether sons or daughters.

P. D.—It is a good sign, and the more he groans and cries the better it is. A French physician contends that groaning and crying are the two grand operations by which nature allays anguish. He says that he has uniformly observed, that those who give way to their natural feelings more speedily recover from accidents than those who suppose that it is unworthy of a man to betray such symptoms of

cowardice as either to groan or cry. He is always pleased by the crying or roaring of a patient during the time he is undergoing a violent surgical operation, because they soothe the nervous system and prevent fever. He relates the case of a man who by crying and bawling reduced his pulse from one hundred and twenty-six to sixty in the course of two hours.

LORD SANDOZ.—An "Idol" may be undefined by many accidental causes. Marriage, in particular, is a kind of counter-apotheosis, or a deification inverted. When a man becomes familiar with his goddess or idol, she quickly loses her divinity and sinks into the woman.

A READER OF "THE READER."—You can procure all the particulars by applying to the Board of Education, Privy Council Office, Whitehall.

R. SINGLETON.—If the "young lady" objects to your position as a working man, she is not adapted to be your wife; and would not make a helpmate for you "for better for worse." Your writing would not do for an office.

FRANK DESMOND replies to "Constance" that he will be happy to correspond. He has £200 a year, independent of his profession and "expectations." Is twenty years of age, nearly 6 ft. in height, and of a domestic disposition.

NERO, who is twenty years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, good-looking, well-educated, and possessing an income of £100 a year, desires to devote himself to a young lady (a Greenwich) possessing a similar income, and who is tall, dark, good-looking, well-educated, and of a loving disposition.

ROBERT McD.—Fairy tales would not suit our columns. The offer of yours is therefore declined, with thanks.

WILFRED WALLACE ardently wishes for a loving, good-tempered wife. He is twenty-four, tall, warm-hearted, and fond of home; is not particular as to fair or dark beauty, and makes money no object, as he has abundant means.

ALICE and MAUD wish to correspond with two respectable tradesmen. "Alice" is eighteen, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, height 5 ft. 6 in. They have nothing to offer but loving hearts and good tempers; which, we may add, is a very good dowry.

EMILY KATE wishes she had some one to love her. She is twenty, medium height, has grey eyes, light hair, and considered good-looking. Has no money. The gentleman preferred would be one from Yorkshire, from which we suppose Emily is herself one of "the Lancashire witches."

AMY W. is a young lady who is rather secluded from society, and does not know any eligible young man. She is just twenty, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, has fair complexion, light blue eyes, brown hair and good teeth, has received a plain education, is domestic and amiable. She has no money, but earns her own living. Amy would give her hand and heart by preference to a tall, dark man.

MENKIE also answers "Londini." She is of the middle height, with dark hair and eyes, and her friends consider her good-looking. She is sixteen years of age, and very domesticated, as she hopes "Londini" also is.

A LONELY GIRL, who catalogues her personal advantages as consisting in being "5 ft. 4 in. in height, the possession of a good figure, fair complexion, light brown, wavy hair, high forehead, grey eyes, a good set of teeth, a good temper and a lively disposition," has a loving heart to bestow on a steady, industrious young man.

J. F.—We believe there is no enactment on the subject. In a recent charge to his clergy, the Bishop of Oxford remarked, "If you feel it necessary to take a manuscript sermon into the pulpit, do not read it slavishly," &c.; thereby conveying that extempore preaching might be adopted, if thought proper.

G. W. D., who is 20 years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, dark hair and eyes, and considered good-looking, says he will be glad if any young lady, who will not object to a year or two's courtship, will respond. He would like her to be fair, not above 5 ft. in height, and under eighteen years of age. Money no object, and *carte-de-visite* to be exchanged.

JEAN HENRI—Johnson's "Printer's Dictionary" will give you every information on the technicalities of printing. The French word *card* has various meanings. It signifies sometimes straightness, at others, a blind alley, but generally the depth of a bay. In *ciel* the sound is full.

THE SMITH.—We regret that we cannot supply you with the desired information; but should think that any good work on metallurgy would answer your purpose. Apply to a publisher in Paternoster Row.

CLENCH.—All candidates must, of course, be examined in the dogmas of the Church, and be found "sound in the Articles." It would, however, be damaging to the most orthodox candidate if he had a particle of belief in *Colours*.

ALICE WORTH.—The berth of stewardess in a passenger ship is usually obtained by personal recommendation. You might, however, apply to the captain or owners of such a vessel.

R. O.—Fat is no sign of health or strength. If so, the fattest man would be the strongest, and such men as Edward Bright and Daniel Lambert would have been able to challenge all England for athletic feats. The one was six hundred and the other seven hundred and thirty pounds weight.

JANE W.—The inferior in rank should always be introduced to the superior. As etiquette deems the lady the superior, the gentleman should be introduced to her, not her to him.

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